BLISS CARMAN

BY ODELL SHEPARD

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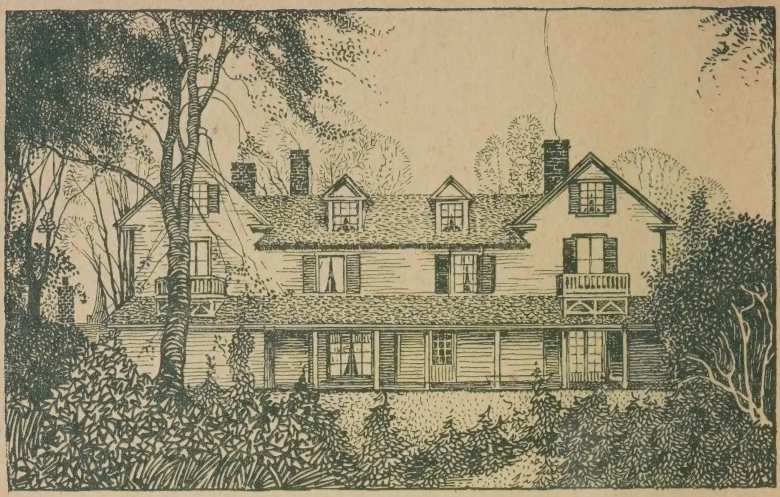

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1st Edition

BLISS CARMAN

By ODELL SHEPARD

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By ODELL SHEPARD

McCLELLAND & STEWART
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TO

MARY PERRY KING

INSPIRER, INTERPRETER, AND FRIEND

OF POETS

Foreword

In the door of the house of life
Beside the fabled sea,
I am a harp-string in the wind,
Aeolian for thee.

SOME twenty years ago a boy pitched his tent by the shore of a western lake and there lived, much of the time alone, through the seasons of the green and the yellow leaf. For month after month he had the wide sparkle of water before him, deep miles of oak woods behind, and in his heart the lordly leisure of youth. Also he had a sufficient assortment of walking-sticks, a fishing-rod, and a cheap flageolet with which he tried to mimic the owls. These possessions seemed to him a sufficient equipment for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Somehow, by what mysterious ways of destiny the man whom this boy became has forgotten or else never knew, there was added to this stock of worldly goods a book,—a book of poems. It seems unlikely that he had reached out for it, feeling the need of such a thing. He had made the usual docile act of faith concerning poetry, vaguely acknowledging its existence as a thing dignified, distant, improving, and highly appropriate for dull Sunday afternoons. The thought of it was

mingled in his mind with memories of dreary classrooms, not to be tolerated on a bright and blowing summer's day. It is true that he had stumbled once or twice upon things in poetry—Spenser's stanza, for example, the pure symmetry of it, and the chiming vowels of Poe's *Ulalume*—which surprised and troubled him with a sense of mysterious beauty; but as no one ever spoke of these things and the text books never mentioned them he decided that they could not be important. Clearly they could have no relation to what he had learned to think was poetry's main business, the sugar-coating of bitter moral pills. And so his attitude toward the greatest of the arts was respectful, vague, immature, and highly representative. Upon one matter only had he reached clear conviction: for reasons past his discovery English poetry had jolted to a full stop at the death of Tennyson, and that of America had come to an end, probably forever, when Longfellow laid down his pen.

Yet it should be acknowledged, probably, that there was a place made ready in the boy's mind for a vivid contemporary poetry in case he had the good luck to find it. Into that place, and into just that fortunate nick of time, fell this book of poetry—and the trick was turned. Endless things were decided, important to him if to no one else in the world, by that fortunate chance. Any one of a hundred other books might possibly have done as much for him at the moment as this book did,

but none of them could have done quite the same thing. No other book could have sent him on toward manhood with quite the same tinge of fancy or mold of thought, for the reason that there was no other book in the world, even of the three or four which had already come from the same pen, at all like it. Upon every page, stanza, and line there was clearly visible the strong stamp of personality. Just what it was that made the book unique in his experience the boy could not have said, for this was only his introduction to the mystery of style. Yet he was never for a moment in doubt after turning the first page that here was a "touch of manner, hint of mood" which was native to him, that here was a spirit with which he was proud to claim at least a distant kinship. Such consanguinities, it appeared, were arranged for by the beneficent gods, and life would be less lonely than he had supposed. He was vaguely conscious of his good fortune, and gave thanks for it. The world seemed a richer place.

The very poet whom the boy had thus found for himself had already written in the dedication of a certain prose book of his to a famous friend: "A book is written only for him who finds it, and should carry to the finder some palpable or even intimate revelation of the man who made it. It is as if, by a tone of the voice or a turn of the head, a stranger should suddenly appeal to us as a comrade. And while it is true that the offices of friendship are not fully accomplished until we

have eaten our bushel of salt together, it is also certain that the flavor of friendship may be recognized with the smallest grain."

Like all true friendship, this book answered to deeper needs than any of which the boy was aware. Like all generosity, it gave him more than he would have known how to ask for, phrase after phrase reaching down into half-formed moods and thoughts which could not have kept alive much longer without just this sanction and support. In the first poem, *Lord of My Heart's Elation,* he saw religion lifted clear for the first time in his experience of the ruck of dogma and creed, love of God united with love of Earth, Hebraic intensity allied to Hellenic calm. Then came the *Creature Catechism,* a joyous prayer going up not from the mouths of professional priests but from the humblest worshippers in "God's first temples," giving a novel and poignant meaning to the verse which says that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." Farther on he found those four or five pieces of pure verbal magic called collectively *Among the Aspens*—

> All summer my companion
> Was a white aspen tree,
> Far up the sheer blue canyon
> A glad door-ward for me—

phrasing with what seemed a miraculous exactitude what the boy had been thinking himself but could not say as he sat beneath the chattering

leaves by his tent door. But why go on to enumerate all the poems which he read at that time which he reread, and learned by heart? To do so would be to give the table of contents of *The Green Book of the Bards.*

An exhilarating sense of liberation was the first effect of this reading, a discovery that some of the problems which had been most puzzling need not after all be bothered about. The boy discovered then for the first but not the last time how very much deeper and truer a thing religion may be than the preachers have been able to say. Religion shorn of its hampering dogma and all the piety of pulpit and pew, a religion which remembered beauty and was still mindful of the flesh, was still, he found, a possible thing in the twentieth century as it had been before the first. As the youths of an earlier generation had listened to the emancipating words of Emerson, so he listened to these:

> Let not tradition fill my ears
> With prate of evil and of good,
> Nor superstition cloak my sight
> Of beauty with a bigot's hood.
>
> The word that lifts the purple shaft
> Of crocus and of hyacinth
> Is more to me that platitudes
> Rethundering from groin and plinth.
>
> And at the first clear careless strain
> Poured from a woodbird's silver throat

I have forgotten all the lore
The preacher bade me get by rote.

Be others worthy to receive
The naked messages of God;
I am content to find their trace
Among the people of the sod.

Affirming far more than it denied, however, the book did not merely liberate the boy from the trammels of a creed-bound orthodoxy and the inhibitions of a decadent Puritanism. Like Emerson, it brought beauty back for him into God's world; like Whitman, the joys of sense; like Browning, it made him feel "how good is man's life, the mere living." This was great service to a youth who was to live his life in a country which had been taught for nearly three centuries to fear the flesh and to ignore the siren call of beauty as a devil's wile. From this book he learned the fundamental lesson that the acceptable service of God is not in a rejection of all that God has made but that the full life of the spirit is utterly dependent upon full and unthwarted life of body and mind. Out of this basic truth, so simple and so universally ignored, vast corollaries grew. Nature had been for him a marvelous temple; here entered in the God. Beauty had been a thoughtless joy; here was added its human meaning. Laughter of leaves in sunshine, play of leaf shadows on the ground, grasses and daisy-heads billowing down the wind—these things had always been lovely, but henceforth they were dowered with a soul.

And now that twenty summers stretch between the boy who read and the man who sets himself to criticize the *Green Book of the Bards,* what is the final verdict? Few books that we read with eager joy at eighteen are more than tolerable at thirty-eight. Very little of what lay so dewy and wonderful in the dawn endures the vertical rays of noon. To pass a cool and unbiassed judgment upon the enthusiasms of youth is one of the most questionable privileges of the middle years. In recompense for many disappointments, however, we may have the assurance that whatever stands the test of youth and maturity alike is of high excellence.

> Youth ended, I shall try
> My gain and loss thereby;
> Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold.

The effort and ambition of all true criticism must be, of course, the "see the thing as in itself it really is," but this is an ideal never fully achieved. Always there must be some alloy of the subjective in every attempt we make to find and tell the exact truth. We see in a landscape, a face, a book, only what we are prepared to see, only what in some sense and degree we already are ourselves. "It is never wise," says the author of *The Poetry of Life,* "to try to make just estimates of our contemporaries. At best, we can only give opinions limited by our angle of outlook and colored by the atmosphere of our own time." And if this is true of

criticism in general, how much more it must be the case in an effort to analyze a mind and art which have been working in one's thought for twenty years. And yet after all we need not be intimidated by the hackneyed assertion that criticism of one's contemporaries is not criticism but conversation. It may be, at any rate, conversation of a rather agreeable sort.

Some passages in the pages that follow are to be understood as coming from the thankful heart of a boy who sat in his tent long ago by a western lake and discovered in one book the twin worlds of nature and of art. Although it may be desirable to exclude from some of our literary judgments the spirit of frank, outspoken, whole-hearted love, the thing could not in this instance be done. Concerning other poets the boy of whom I have spoken has now very little to say, for the reason that he had not read them; but about the man who wrote the *Green Book of the Bards* he has been determined to speak his mind. The final responsibility for this study rests, however, with a somewhat older and soberer person, slightly better informed about the world's poetry and the standards of literary criticism. How well the voices of this strange duet have been harmonized is for the reader to judge. There can be no possible discord between them, however, in an expression of deep gratitude for the gift of wonder to the boy, for the gift of joy to the man, and for the final gift of friendship which has crowned these twenty years.

Contents

		PAGE
	FOREWORD	vii
I.	DAYS	1
II.	THE MAN	11
III.	WORKS	31
IV.	NATURE	73
V.	ART	93
VI.	THOUGHT	107
VII.	STYLE	149

I

Days

Tatters of yesterdays and shreds
Of morrow clothe us every one.

I

Days

BLISS CARMAN was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, on the fifteenth day of April, 1861. His remoter ancestors were among these staunch United Empire Loyalists who went out from the newly-founded United States to people and subdue a second wilderness rather than sacrifice an ideal as dear to them as that which had brought their fathers to American shores. On the mother's side he is descended from Daniel Bliss, one of the most famous and powerful of the early ministers at Concord and great-grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The Carman family, which had emigrated from England to Long Island in 1632, removed to New Brunswick in 1783, where Richard Carman became one of the original grantees of the City of St. John. With this city the fortunes of the family were for several generations bound up—the city of which the poet writes:

> Loyalists, my fathers, builded
> This gray port by the gray sea,
> When the duty to ideals
> Would not let well-being be.

In this city where commerce and agriculture, Europe

and the wilderness, come together and crowd one another in the streets, the poet's mind began to gather memories long before he was born.

Mr. Carman's Canadian birth and New England ancestry have provided him with two loyalists, to both of which he has been true. To be strictly accurate and fair, therefore, one must call him not a Canadian poet nor yet an American, seeing that the latter word has been so grievously misused. He is a North American poet, continental rather than national. Although his family is of the oldest New England stock, it has never recognized any breach with Old England. Just so his poetry, although it is truly American in manner and substance, has never been warped or twisted by any attempt to differentiate it from the poetry of Englishmen. He has turned as naturally to Arnold and Browning as Stephen Phillips turned to Milton and Tennyson, and he has been not only content but proud to conform his work to England's tradition of a thousand years. Thus we get in reading him a sense of continuity together with a sense of difference. He plays his own tunes, but on an instrument which echoes still with memories of master hands.

The Puritan strain in Bliss Carman's ancestry has left no trace unless, perhaps, in the strong didactic bent of some of his later poetry. The departure of his ancestors from New England was as important in the making of the future poet as their first coming into it. They

returned very soon, for one thing, to the English Church. That sturdy idealism which their first struggle with the wilderness had bred into them was deeply confirmed by the second, undertaken as it was at the very time when those whom they left behind in the infant states were fast settling down into the ruts of material prosperity. The Loyalists were picked men. Although inured to frontier life, they were for the most part from the wealthy, official, and professional classes. Naturally, therefore, education was their first care, receiving at least as much attention as it had in their earlier home at the same time that it was freed once and for all of hampering dogma.

At the Collegiate School of Fredericton which he attended from 1872 to 1878 the boy was profoundly influenced by the head-master, George R. Parkin, later and for many years general superintendent of the Cecil Rhodes Scholarship Trust. To the inspiration of this man, then just returned from his momentous debates at the Oxford Union with H. H. Asquith on Imperial Federation, Mr. Carman attributes his first interest in the world of letters. This inspiration, gracefully and gratefully recorded in the dedication of *The Kinship of Nature,* was probably the most important influence which has been exerted upon the poet by any man. It may have determined his early intention, happily never carried out, to fit himself for the teaching profession.

After graduating from the University of New

Brunswick in 1881, with honors in Latin and Greek, Carman spent a year at home in private reading and then went to Edinburgh for a year of study, mostly in philosophy, mathematics, and physics. During this year he did his first writing in verse—certain translations from Horace and the Homeric Hymns. Returning to Fredericton in 1884 he studied law, taught school for a few terms, and did some field engineering. The sail was flapping against the mast for some time during these years, it would seem, before it found a favoring breeze; but then, as throughout the years that were to come, there was probably a sense of time enough yet—or perhaps not so much a sense of time at all as of eternity. From 1886 to 1888 he was at Harvard, studying English literature under Professor Francis Child with the expectation that he might eventually teach the subject, but he was somewhat drawn away from this intention by his persisting interest in science and by his admiration for Professor Josiah Royce, who was then just beginning his brilliant lectures in philosophy. The study of literature, science and philosophy alike was gradually edged aside by a growing need for self-expression; the sifting and storing processes of the student gave place to the more aggressive work of the maker. At the age of about twenty-five he began to write original verse, contributing much of his work at first to the pages of the *Harvard Monthly*. While still at Harvard he met Richard Hovey, who had graduated

from Dartmouth College in 1885 and had gone to Newton, Massachusetts, to study Hebrew with his famous uncle, Alvah Hovey, with the intention, incredible as it may seem, of entering the church. How the two young students reacted upon each other has been adequately recorded in three unforgotten little books. After their meeting we hear little more about Hebrew or philosophy. Good and earnest students both, they were nevertheless free and ardent and young, with much of the "wisdom never learned from any musty prose." Young men who "went in for" poetry in those days were even rarer than they are now, and each of these two may well have thought himself unique in his generation. One can imagine that they looked at each other with a wild surmise and saw at once how much the case was altered by a one hundred per cent. increase in the poetical profession. One poet alone would have been lonely, but two would be enough. At any rate, they turned their backs rather suddenly upon professor's chair and pulpit and fled away into Vagabondia, which seems to have been nearer to the Charles at that time than it is now, and the roads were good.

At this time Carman began spending his summers with his cousin Charles G. D. Roberts at Windsor, Nova Scotia, a few miles from the Acadian country made famous to the world by Longfellow's *Evangeline*. Roberts, who was then a professor of English at Windsor, had begun publication at the age of twenty and was

already widely known as a poet. His work had some influence in forming the early style of his cousin, and it is easy to discover turns of phrase common to even the later writings of the two. During these summers in Acadie the greater part of the volume entitled *Low Tide on Grand Pré* was composed, although the title poem of that volume had been published in the *Atlantic Monthly* while Carman was still at Harvard.

From 1890 to 1892 Mr. Carman held an editorial position on the New York *Independent*. Later, he was engaged for a time on *Current Literature,* and still later on the *Atlantic Monthly*. He edited the clever and influential *Chap Book* from the time of its first issue in May, 1894, until its publishers moved from Cambridge to Chicago. In 1892 he spent the first of several winters at the home of Richard Hovey in Washington, D.C.

The first of Mr. Carman's books, *Low Tide on Grand Pré,* appeared in 1893. In the thirty years since then he has published some thirty books, four of which are in prose. His broadsheets, pamphlets, and leaflets, several of which were issued privately before his first book and which have been put forth at odd intervals ever since, lift the total number of his publications to about one hundred titles. In this connection it may be said that the sumptuous collected edition of his work, in two volumes royal octavo, which was published in England in 1904 constitutes an honor the like of which has never been accorded to any other American poet in

his own lifetime. He has another unusual if not unique distinction among contemporary poets in being the subject of an elaborate, sympathetic, and discerning study in a doctoral dissertation presented and published at the University of Rennes, France, by H. D. C. Lee, in 1912.

In 1895, while living in New York City, Mr. Carman began writing a signed weekly column for the *Boston Transcript,* first entitled *The Modern Athenian,* and later *Marginal Notes.* These articles were continued for about five years, during part of which time they were also printed by newspapers in New York and in Chicago. The prose books later published under the titles: *The Kinship of Nature, The Friendship of Art,* and *The Poetry of Life* were largely made up from these essays.

The spring of 1896 Carman spent in England and France, taking a walking tour with his friend B. G. Goodhue. After 1897 he made his winter home in New York City and spent the summers in the Catskill mountains, on Nantucket Island, and at Scituate, Massachusetts. This routine was broken by occasional visits to Canada and by such fruitful excursions into fresh woods and pastures new as that to the Bahama Islands in 1898 and that to California in 1905. The winter of 1907-8 was spent in Boston, writing with Mrs. Mary Perry King *The Making of Personality.* Much of the material in *The Rough Rider,* particularly of the Con-

cord poems, was composed at this time. In 1908 he went to live at New Canaan, Connecticut, a little town among the hills, a few miles from Long Island Sound, and there he has spent his winters ever since. In summer he lives in the Catskill mountains, a region which has come to mean almost as much to him in his later work as the Nova Scotia country did to the earlier. During the later months of the war he was engaged in editorial work with the *Vigilantes* association. An alarming break-down in health in the early winter of 1920 caused grave concern to his hundreds of friends, but a short period of rest brought him back to health and vigor. The steadily increasing interest in his work has made it necessary for him to take during the last two years two very extensive lecture and reading tours. In one of these he has crossed the continent, appearing in all the larger cities and towns from Montreal to Vancouver and from Los Angeles to New York.

II
The Man

He who never learned unrest
Here amid our fury of toil.

II

The Man

IT will be seen that the external events of Mr. Carman's life, in-so-far, at least, as they have been related, are neither dramatic nor very revealing. Knowledge of the books he has written throws a flood of light, to be sure, upon the facts; but even if one knew all the facts and all the books there would still remain a legitimate curiosity concerning the man himself which it would be the duty of criticism to satisfy. Bliss Carman himself has written, in *The Friendship of Art*: "The Scientist or philosopher, with an unflinching and unquenchable curiosity, asks of the universe, 'Who goes there behind the shadowy substance? What Presence inhabits these fleeting forms, which make the lovely earth? Where dwells the Eternal, and what like is the Unchanging, if any Unchanging or Eternal there be?' In his smaller way the critic stands before a work of art, inquiring in like spirit, 'What manner of man was behind this thing? What soul found vent in this shape of beauty? What comprehending being lent a passing permanence to its own aspirations in this scrap of art?' "

From the bare facts of Bliss Carman's biography we should be able to deduce with certainty not more than

one important conclusion,—that his has been a life chiefly remarkable for its ample margins of leisure. He has never married or in any other way given hostages to fortune; he has engaged in nothing that might properly be called a gainful occupation, since the writing and publishing of poetry certainly does not fall under that category; he has lived where he pleased and has done his work when he would, a foot-free wanderer, a spectator rather than a participant, a man in love with life. We may imagine that it has required some skill for him to elude this and that entanglement which might have drawn him so completely into special kinds of activity as to interfere with the artist's steady gaze upon the whole of life. Many a lesser responsibility, it may be, he has instinctively avoided in order to save himself free for the greater. How otherwise can we explain the anomaly of his career—an American of the twentieth century living a serene unhurried life outside the competitive scramble, undismayed by the roar of traffic, untouched by the passions of party, unmoved by propaganda? And this has been accomplished, be it said, with no suggestion of pose or of self-consciousness, with no twinge of envy, no regret that he could not eat his cake and have it too. Without any heat whatever of the mind he has kept the warmth of the heart, "preserving in the midst of the crowd, with perfect sweetness, the independence of solitude."

Merely to see that a man stands aside from a struggle

which is wholly absorbing to his fellows does not, however, reveal him to us. We still need to know what motive governs his abstention, for what higher prize he reserves his strength. To say of Bliss Carman that he has turned away from what most men of now-a-days call life in order that he might really live would not be very helpful, leaving as it would the crucial question what "life" has meant to him. By way of answer to this question one can at least say that it has not meant strife but serenity, not ambition but acceptance, not acquisition but appreciation. He has been one of the very few who not only see the childish folly of spending a lifetime in accumulating the materials for living but who actually conduct their lives in accordance with what they see. He has bought this freedom, no doubt, with a great price, but the real question is only what he has done with it. Ultimately, he has had no other purpose or aspiration than to live a normal and complete human life—a life unwarped in any direction, deficient in nothing human, rendering justice to body and mind and soul, which means to beauty and truth and goodness. This he has found to be enough for one life-work. Serenity, poise, balance, completeness—these words suggest something of what he has always sought to gain for himself and to communicate to others; but the one word that sums them up is "happiness." Realizing that "the end is the chief thing of all," he has cheerfully thrown aside every dispensable bit of baggage which might have

impeded his progress toward the goal. He has sought what we all are seeking, but by a less circuitous route. His first concern has been to live a normal life, and he would undoubtedly subscribe to Milton's remark that "he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well ought himself to be a true poem." Thus it comes about that his poetry does not seem the work of a specialist, of what an Elizabethan would have called a "mere poet," but rather the natural and inevitable outflowing into expression of a full and rounded life. With results which have been both good and ill, he writes with the quiet ease of a man whose passion for perfection is not to be concentrated upon any single production or even upon any single phase of activity because it has to inform and govern every thought and feeling and act. In an unpublished poem he has made Kallimachos of Mitylene express contentment with the sort of success which he himself has won:

> Others may attain more splendid triumphs
> Of sheer beauty wrought in paint or marble,
> Win their coveted rewards when glory
> Blows the trump of fame that men forget not.
> I content me with the lesser fortune,
> The more human joy unmarred by envy
> Or the bitter fever of ambition.
> Unremembered when you name the masters
> Of the world, and loving only beauty,
> Love, and pleasure, I am still their equal
> In some measure, having met with gladness
> In the way, and thinking happy hours
> More to be desired than praise or riches.

The man who strives for rounded completeness in an age of specialization, who tries to make himself an integer in a time of human fractions, is likely to find his reward in self-approbation rather than in acclaim. He who remembers that he is body, mind, and soul, and who tries to achieve as full development of each of his three natures as is consistent with the development of the other two, is not likely to seem remarkable in any one. To the religionist such a man will seem too much concerned with body and mind; to the mere thinker he will seem too preoccupied with sensation and emotion; and to the athlete he will be incomprehensibly spiritual and cerebral. In a society in which the more obvious prizes of life are won by highly specialized skill we set little value upon the balance and proportion of human powers. One-sidedness has a higher commercial rating than symmetry. Our sense of human wholeness has atrophied sadly during the Christian centuries, and we are reluctant to admit that a man can be excellent in more than one broad way.

These are conditions which render difficult any attempt to describe a personality chiefly remarkable for proportion, symmetry, poise. One is tempted to let a string of carefully chosen negatives do his work; but in the case of Bliss Carman this device will not serve. His rejections and instinctive avoidances have had a positive motive and have result in a personality which, for all its delicate balance, is strongly marked. One comes

to see eventually, after clearing his mind of the thicker mists of the Time Spirit through which almost any sensible life looks grotesque, that the fundamental trait of this character is simple normality. Bliss Carman's effort has been steadily upward from the average toward the normal. The chief trait of his thought is common sense. His ability to distinguish between the means to be used and the end to be attained is a mark of clear thinking. The ample leisure in which he has always lived is due to his realization that the passing hour is all that we shall ever have, that this magical Now, this golden To-day, is not to be worthily lived if we regard it as mere preparation when in reality it is fruition. He is no specialist in beauty, but has given it only the place which it must have in any well ordered life, and his poetry has been made as a wholly spontaneous and normal expression of normal moods.

The balance of freedom with restraint, spontaneity with soberness, thought with passion which is so apparent in the life and writing of Bliss Carman is to be attributed in some degree to the teaching and influence of George R. Parkin. From this great teacher the pupil learned to grapple fiercely with fact, but never to rest contented with fact until it had been transmuted into truth. In the school at Fredericton it was made forever impossible that he should ever ally himself even temporarily with any aesthetic theory of tendency which concentrates upon the bare external image, the mere

language of art, and ignores art's prime purpose, interpretation. There he gained that thorough grounding in the ancient classics which has worked so obviously for good in his later thought. His classic training gave him far more than information; it helped to form the man, the artist, the poet. It established for him a norm to which he might return after the imaginative vagabondage of his youth— a form of conduct, of thought and feeling, of expression. The stamp of the Greek is on him, ineradicable and compelling, subtly governing every mood and motive, each shade of opinion, making everywhere for moderation and poise. Whether or not he could now translate an ode of Pindar or compose a correct Latin verse, he has absorbed and made his own the essential spirit of Greek culture, and this fact is at least as evident in what he is as in what he knows.

Nothing, in fact, sets Bliss Carman apart from other American poets more clearly than this quality of his mind and art which must be called, for want of a better word, "Hellenic." The misused and hackneyed adjective "pagan" does not fit him because there is too much of the Christian, too much interest in the partial and evolving, too much delight in the "glory of the imperfect" in his work for an orthodox paganism. And yet, in reading his later poems one feels at times that the two thousand years of Christian history have been blown away, and that some lithe and supple Pericleian Greek stands looking out, calm and clear-eyed, over

some vast Canadian forest of flaming maple trees. Fantastic as this may seem, it will serve to indicate the strange mingling in Carman's poetry of the old and new, of the most restringent of all cultural disciplines with unchartered freedom.

From whatever angle we consider the man, his thought, his life, his work, we are brought back to the Horatian golden mean, the classic "nothing too much." He learned in youth both self-reliance and comradeship, discovering the truth of Emerson's maxim that solitude is an excellent mistress but an intolerable wife. With a fine talent for friendship, he has found time and inclination to be much alone. He has loved and has done hard work, but he has had the courage, even in our strenuous day, to love and to practise idleness also. More than either he has loved that golden leisure which it is so nearly impossible to define in a modern tongue because it is nearly vanished from the face of the earth. In thought and critical theory he has been neither reactionary nor radical, neither

> "the first by whom the new is tried
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

He has not striven for notoriety nor has he shrunk with inverted egotism from the fame which he has honestly won. No reader of his poetry need be told that he has loved dreams, but his thought has steadily strengthened through the years its grip upon reality. In an age

of intense specialization he has tried to live up to that old ideal which taught men to harmonize the most widely sundered extremes and to occupy all the territory which lay between them.

To anyone who sees that normality and poise are the salient characteristics of Bliss Carman's mind it is perhaps unnecessary to say that his poetry is not "new" in the narrow sense in which we are using that word to-day, as though there were or could ever be any new poetry that is not also very old. The best of his writing has the high virtue of timelessness. Long ago he gave up trying to fit his work into the present nick of time, having discovered that the only fountain of enduring youth bubbles up out of all past years. "Men will not care," says he, "to perpetuate what is essentially modern in our work, but rather what is essentially human, essentially poetic, essentially beautiful." By the same token, he has not cared to give his poetry a facile novelty—the easiest quality for the artist to secure, and the most worthless. He has not spent his strength trying to avoid what other poets have said but has striven to find out what things a sound and balanced poet in such a world as this *must* say, together with the comment and marginalia suggested by his own angle of vision. When it has been necessary to the full expression of his own thought and feeling, he has not hesitated to rephrase the thought of other men, because that thought has been his also; and thus he has shown true in-

dependence in the only right way. He has no nervous fear of seeming derivative—a fear which is not, perhaps, a mark of truly original minds. From one master and another he has learned what he could, as Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dante, Virgil, and doubtless even Homer, did before him, with the result that his poetry is not the bare and narrow record of one man's life alone, but is broadly human and representative. And so one comes across bits of his writing which, even though they be still damp from the press, seem somehow as old as human hopes and fears.

In writing about Bliss Carman at just this time one has a feeling that he is addressing at most "a little clan." Only the more strident voices can be heard in these raucous years, and the voice that sounds in his poetry has never been strained to overtop the noises of the street. It is a voice neither thin nor subdued—full-bodied and powerful, cultivated and controlled while remaining untamed—but it comes to us, so to speak, from a great way off, filtered through distance and time. Not in a mood of prophecy but in that of calm judgment, however, one may say that there can never be a time so wild and distraught that voices of this sort will be utterly forgotten. Always there will be at least a little clan, a saving remnant, upon whose devotion the enduring life of the classic may safely depend. One cannot think of any future in which some of the *Songs of the Sea Children* will not still live and glow, in some few hearts still

thrilling and singing themselves anew. After her more than two thousand years Sappho has only the faithful few, but they are all that she would ask.

There is always the chance, moreover, that what the few undeafened and keen-listening ears can catch to-day may be heard by many more to-morrow. And that to-morrow may not be remote for the poetry we are considering. In the fine arts of the past decade we have had high carnival enough, riot and debauch enough, frenzied and chaotic experimentation in novel shudders more than enough, and we find it increasingly difficult to find even amusement in these things. We have severed beauty from truth and found, at last, that neither can live without the other. The resulting bankruptcy of our art might have gone unsuspected for some years to come had we not been overtaken by a crisis which calls aloud for some clear light of the ideal. We find that the poetry of the day, for reasons not at all recondite, cannot give us what we seek. Self-tortured and attitudinizing egoism cannot save us; we are unenlightened by the poetry of superficial sensation; naturalism staggering downward into animalism has no word for us; morbid eroticism has ceased to shock or even to interest us; and "imagism" has become a weary bore.

"It is poetry's job to catch up," wrote an apostle of artistic cataclysm in the year before the Great War. He meant that poetry, in his opinion, was lagging woefully behind "Cubism" and "Vorticism," behind the cacophon-

ic schools in music, as also behind the automobile, the aeroplane, the cinematograph. And the "new poetry" would seem to have taken this orphic saying so seriously to heart that now, at what we may hope is its latest gasp, it might proudly quote the words of a famous death-bed, "I have done my damndest."

But no! It is poetry's job, now as always, simply to be its own serene, unhurried, incorruptible self. Now that the forces of anarchy have worked themselves out in such unintelligible monstrosities as *The Waste Land,* now that we clearly see that "that way madness lies," may we not expect poetry to resume its real business? Having tried all things, must it not now begin to hold fast that which is true? Eccentric and centrifugal modes of thought and feeling having had their day, must it not soon feel the strong and steady pull toward normality? Must it not feel downward again for solid footing in the bed-rock of the universal? Already it is apparent that in the art of the future there will be a note of grave simplicity—not the amazed and childish simplicity of Blake, the innocence which is so like sheer ignorance, but the mature simplicity which is aware of many things it is not troubled by. In the years coming on, it may be, poetry will really be for us, as was prophesied, an ever surer and surer stay, because we shall no longer hear in it a voice shouting itself hoarse in praise of headlong passion but a calm clear voice calling us back to wisdom, sobriety, and self-control.

In such a time as that for which we may reasonably hope the poetry of Bliss Carman will have a wider public than it has to-day. Emphatically he is not a poet who has outlived his reputation; the fact is that he has never really entered into his own, for the reason that his best work has been done in a time not ready to understand it. He has not written for our time alone, nor even in our time. He does not hold himself aloof from the present with a sentimental nostalgia for other ages such as we find in John Keats, but it may be said of him that all the faith he has in to-day is drawn not from what he sees about him but from his hopes for to-morrow. "Lead me through the streets of our great cities," says he, "and fill my ears with stories of our uncounted millions of money, our unrivalled advance among the nations, but that will not divert my horror at a state of society where municipal government is a venal farce, where there is little reverence for law, where Mammon is a real God, and where every week there are instances of mob violence as revolting as any that ever stained the history of the emperors of degenerate Rome. . . . You cannot expect a nation which cares nothing for art to care very much for justice or righteousness. You cannot expect a man who does not care how hideous his surroundings are to care very fastidiously for his moral obligations."

Complete sympathy with one's own time is either a result of thoughtless ignorance or else a very fortu-

nate accident which befalls few thinking men. Bliss Carman is most sharply distinguished from the greater number of his contemporaries by his belief that life is justified in and by itself, as an adventure or experience, apart from anything that may be attained or accomplished in and by it. Other men live for pleasure, for money, for truth, or for "service;" but he has lived solely in order to live. He exemplifies the truth of Stevenson's pregnant remark, "It is better to have travelled than to have arrived," and of the old French proverb which asserts that the chase is more than the quarry. With something of Wordsworth's wise passiveness he accepts the sun and wind and rain of life with almost equal delight, determined to "see all, nor be afraid." In words which he has written about another, he is

> One of the tribe of Stevenson and Borrow,
> Who live to-day and let alone to-morrow.

One would say that for a long time he has found nothing in life for which he would sell his treasure of a quiet heart. His life has shown the truth of one of the most trenchant sentences in the Vagabondia books, "Success is in the silences, though fame is in the song." Perhaps one might express it all by saying that he has not regarded life as a business, as most men do, but as an art. One is convinced, indeed, that this art of living has been his chief concern, that personality is his masterpiece, and that his poetry has been only an inevitable by-product. "Un-

flinching logic," says he, "unbounded love, unmitigated delight, any one of which in excess alone would quickly work the ruin of a personality, will, when duly balanced in one fortunate person, operate together for the happiest issue of that life. Only from such an individuality may we expect significant and enduring achievement in art."

This exigent art of living, like all other arts, begins with a wholesale rejection of things unfit and excessive. In his cheerful renunciation of what others regard as the only goods of this world, in his inspired frugality and genius for making a little go a long way, Bliss Carman reminds one not a little of Thoreau. He has always been more interested in the miracle than in the loaves and fishes. If he has got more out of life than many others do, that is partly because he has not worn his years away in accumulating the raw materials of happiness, only to lay himself down upon the unfinished pile—to die. The many things for which he has never striven have left him enormously opulent in time, like the leisurely men of the elder world. Even in his earliest poetry one gets a sense of vast backgrounds of time, those spacious temporal distances and intervals which only children and poets feel. It is with him, to use his own words, as though

> time were ripe, and years had done
> Their wheeling underneath the sun.

Whether in the long nights of his Northern boyhood or in rapt musings over the infinitely patient work of nature, he has learned what he calls "eternity's unhaste." Like his own Golden Rowan for whom time stood still, he has "the soul no circumstance can hurry or defer." This major characteristic of the man, like all the others, is implicit in his poetry and explicit in the prose books. "Haste," he writes, "is the fever of power, a malaria of the soul; and you will find that the great characters of the earth, in history and in our own day, are those who have been able to hold themselves undistracted and undismayed. . . It is not the province of the soul to labor. Its proper office is to exist, to be and to enjoy, to sorrow if it must, to rejoice when it can, to direct, order, and govern. . . . Serenity is the atmosphere of poise, the still air in which the nicely adjusted balance of all our powers may be maintained. To preserve it we should be willing to sacrifice everything but life itself."

The vast reservoirs of quiet in the man have not been filled at a city tap but by the streams of silence flowing down from "the sleep which is among the everlasting hills." Serenity and patience are the chief lessons he has learned from a lifetime of loving partnership with nature.

Ah, the patience of earth! Look down at the dark pointed firs;
They are carved out of blackness; one pattern recurs and recurs.
They crowd all the gullies and hillsides, the gashes and spurs,
As silent as death. What an image! How nature avers

The goodness of calm with that taciturn beauty of hers!
As silent as sleep. Yet the life in them climbs and upstirs.
They too have received the great law, know that haste but
defers
The perfection of time,—the initiate gospeller firs.

III
Works

This is the sound of the Word
From the waters of sleep,
The rain-soft voice that was heard
On the face of the deep,
When the fog was drawn back like a veil, and the sentinel tides
Were given their thresholds to keep.

III.

Works

IN the thirty-five years since he began to write poetry Bliss Carman's work has ranged through three distinctly marked periods. The writing of his youth was strongly Romantic, even "gothic" in its obscurity and wilful idiosyncrasy. This period was followed by one of equally excessive rationalism. The powerful stabilizing tendency of his mind, however, has brought about a synthesis or resolution of these extremes in his last period which saves what was best in the earlier styles but fuses and tempers them in a new poetic unity. The first period includes *Low Tide on Grand Pré* and the Vagabondia poems. The second period may be said to have begun with *Behind the Arras,* for in that book, although there is much Gothic strangeness and Celtic obscurity still lingering, obstinate questionings begin to disturb the poet's mind, so that much of the grace which had been so important an element of the earlier style is sacrificed to the lucidity demanded by rapidly increasing didacticism. The abstract moralizing of the second period is most obvious in the longer poems of *The Green Book of the Bards.* The final period, in which charm of manner is joined to lucid simplicity and reason is wed-

ded to imagination, began not much earlier than the poet's turn to the ancient classics for models and materials when he was working on the *Book of Myths* and *Sappho.*

Low Tide on Grand Pré, although it appeared when its author was thirty-two years of age, is in every good sense a young man's book. Not that it shows any sign of immaturity, for all that it attempts to do is triumphantly done. Before these twenty-five poems were put before the world their maker had been writing verse for seven or eight years, and his prentice time was over. Already he had very little left to learn in the technic of his art. Nevertheless, one would know at a glance that the book was written by a man still young because of its freshness, its wonder at a world all new, and because it has rather more aroma than substance and so much delightful singing for singing's sufficient sake. It contains half a dozen pieces of pure verbal witchery which were made for no conceivable reason in the world except for love of beautiful sound. Aimless and fragile as thistledrift they are, but magical, and lovely forever. English words have seldom been more cunningly woven together to make a web of haunting beauty than in the poem *Why*:

> For a name unknown
> Whose fame unblown
> Sleeps in the hills
> For ever and aye;

For her who hears
The stir of the years
Go by on the wind
  By night and day;

And heeds no thing
Of the needs of spring,
Of autumn's wonder
  Or winter's chill;

For one who sees
The great sun freeze
As he wanders a-cold
  From hill to hill;

And all her heart
Is a woven part
Of the flurry and drift
  Of whirling snow;

For the sake of two
Sad eyes and true,
And the old, old love
  So long ago.

There are several much better poems than this in *Low Tide on Grand Pré,* but this, with its atmosphere of mystery and distance, its vague thoughts of love and vague melancholy, may be said to indicate with some accuracy the tone of the volume. Poems of this sort, however, do not give the measure of the poetry to be found in the book, for it contained not only *The Eavesdropper,* certainly one of the most haunting poems written in our time, but also the splendid and powerful *Pulvis et Um-*

bra. Already, then, in this carefully winnowed and delicately harmonized collection, it was made evident that America had a new poet who could both sing and say, who combined a finished craftsmanship with unmistakable power.

The Vagabondia books are still too well known to stand in need of extended comment. The writer has heard Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson say that these three little books first gave American readers of the nineties reason to suspect that we might after all have a contemporary American poetry, and it has become almost a commonplace for critics and historians of our recent "poetical renaissance" to date from them. Novel and attractive in format as they were fresh in style, the Vagabondia books were read by every one who professed to care at all for poetry and by a good many who did not.

The comment made by the *London Athenaeum* upon the first volume of this series is probably as accurate as any that could now be made: "A book full of the rapture of the open air and the open road, of the wayside tavern bench, the April weather, and the 'manly love of comrades.' . . . The charm and interest of the book consist in the real, frank jollity of mood and manner, the gypsy freedom, the intimate, natural happiness of these marching, drinking, fighting, and loving songs. They proclaim a blithe, sane, and hearty Bohemianism in the opening lines. The mood is an unusual one, especially in verse, but welcome, if only as a change, after

the desperate melancholy, the heart-sickness, and life-weariness of the average verse-writer." Francis Thompson wrote of the same book thus in *Merry England*: "These little snatches have the spirit of a gypsy Omar Khayyam. They have always careless *verve,* and often careless felicity; they are masculine and rough as roving songs should be."

Poetical vagabondage, the celebration of the *wanderlust,* had been fully exploited in the road songs of the later romantic poets of Germany and it is rooted at least as far down in time as the road songs of the mediaeval Goliards or *scholares vagantes.* One need not suppose that the two young men who made the *Songs From Vagabondia* went at all deeply into the literature of the subject. In the America of the early nineties the note that sounds from end to end of their three books was entirely new, and it had been only vaguely suggested by a few poems of Walt Whitman, whom scarcely any one at that time read. This note harmonized somehow with the mood of the time, for America was rediscovering the open air in those days, and bicycles, "bloomers," and summer resorts were being invented. For such accidental reasons these three books are probably better known to-day than any other books that Mr. Carman has had to do with. Most of the poems in them were written light-heartedly, many of them were written carelessly as mere whiffs of song. Some of them, nevertheless, are very interesting technically and as evi-

dence of growth in ease and mastery on the part of Bliss Carman. The theme of vagabondage, as we shall see, has always been very congenial to him. In these pages there are a few poems, such as *The Joys of the Road, Make Me Over, Mother April, Daisies,* and *Under the Rowans,* which are worthy to stand among his best. Unquestionably the best of them all, a poem never surpassed in its kind, is *A Vagabond Song*:

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maple can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by,
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

Behind the Arras is a volume of poems even more intensely unified than *Low Tide on Grand Pré,* but here the key is that of brooding rather than of vague and shifting dream. Atmosphere it has as certainly as the earlier book, although of a very different sort. The simple love of beauty tinged with melancholy seen in *Low Tide* and the frank hilarity of the *Songs from Vagabondia* give place here to a questioning, a hesitation, a

doubt, as though the poet's faith had been put to severe trial. In the title poem, gnarled and powerful in stanzaic structure as it is in thought, the poet looks more directly into the shadow than anywhere else, perhaps, in all his work. In the powerful and repellant *Red Wolf,* he tells us what he sees there. These are deeply impressive poems, and they do not stand alone. *Behind the Arras* is one of the three most remarkable books Mr. Carman has published, and the fact that it has long been out of print shows how little the readers of to-day are able to pass final judgment upon its author's place in our literature.

In his next book of importance, *Ballads of Lost Haven,* Mr. Carman employed a form which he had used before, to be sure, in such spirited narrative songs as *Lal of Kilrudden* and *Buie Anajohn,* but never in poems of considerable length. Whether due to the influence of Longfellow, Rossetti, or Swinburne—and one suspects that each of these masters of the form contributed something,—or whether, as is more likely, it should be attributed to his studies under Professor Child at Harvard, his interest in the ballad has been long and deep. Few of his poems conform at all closely, it is true, to the generally accepted definitions of the ballad. To him, apparently, almost any long narrative poem dealing with legendary and supernatural events may be called a ballad without too great a violence to the word. The abrupt transition, elimination

of superfluous explanation, and "incremental repetition" of the traditional form are found in some of his ballads but not in all, and he has seldom attempted such archaic diction as Coleridge used in *The Ancient Mariner.* The chief defects of the ballads, considered as such, are seen in the absence of really dramatic elements and in the weakness of the narrative. Most of them, such as the *Kelpie Riders,* merely build up a romantic atmosphere or present, like *The Yule Guest,* an interesting situation, with little development. When there is some action, as in *The King of Ys* and *Master of the Scud,* it is not always clearly presented.

Not more than half of the poems in this volume are ballads even in name. All of them, however, deal with the sea in one way or another. As the London *Nation* said of it at the time of its appearance, this book "is one hundred pages of salt sea without a trace of Kipling, and yet having a sea-flavor as unmistakable as his, and with a finer touch—with less of repetition, less of mere technicality, and a more varied human interest." One should add that Mr. Carman makes no attempt in this book or elsewhere to write of the sea as a sailor might do, but that he sees and hears it always as a landsman. He regards the sea, in fact, not exactly as a lover of it but somewhat in the way of the ancient Greeks, as mysterious, unfriendly, even hostile, and in several poems of this book he treats it as a symbol of death. Out of the *Ballads of Lost Ha-*

ven, however, comes one of the burliest and most manly of all our songs of the sea, *The Gravedigger*:

Oh, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done.
With an equal grave for lord and knave,
He buries them every one. . . .

Oh, a loafing, idle lubber to him
Is the sexton of the town;
For sure and swift, with a guiding lift,
He shovels the dead men down.

But though he digs so fierce and grim,
His honest graves are wide,
As well they know who sleep below
The dredge of the deepest tide.

Oh, he works with a rollicking stave at lip,
And loud is the chorus skirled;
With the burly rote of his rumbling throat
He batters it down the world.

Oh, crooked is he, but strong enough
To handle the tallest mast;
From the royal barque to the slaver dark,
He buries them all at last.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll have for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

By the Aurelian Wall is a book entirely composed of elegies and memorabilia. The title poem, of course, is addressed to the memory of John Keats. *The White Gull* was written for the centennial of Shelley's birth, and William Blake is celebrated in *The Country of Har.* Raphael, Paul Verlaine, Andrew Straton, and Henry George swell the strangely assorted company. Probably the best and certainly the best known of the poems in this book is *A Seamark,* a threnody for Robert Louis Stevenson. For clarity of outline, passages of exceptional beauty, and sustained dignity of tone, this poem takes high rank in its author's work. A few stanzas will show that it must have been written with deep sincerity of feeling as well as with consummate skill.

'Twill nevermore be April now
But there will lurk a thought of him
At the street corners, gay with flowers
From rainy valleys purple-dim.

O chiefs, you do not mourn alone!
In that stern North where mystery broods,
Our mother grief has many sons
Bred in those iron solitudes.

It does not help them to have laid
Their coil of lightning under seas;
They are as impotent as you
To mend the loosened wrists and knees . . .

And since he was the type of all
That strain in us which still must fare,

The fleeting migrant of a day,
Heart-high, outbound for otherwhere,

Now therefore, where the passing ships
Hang on the edges of the noon,
And Northern liners trail their smoke
Across the rising yellow moon,

Bound for his home, with shuddering screw
That beats its strength out into speed,
Until the pacing watch descries
On the sea-line a scarlet seed

Smolder and kindle and set fire
To the dark selvedge of the night,
The deep blue tapestry of stars,
Then sheet the dome in pearly light,

There in perpetual tides of day,
Where men may praise him and deplore,
The place of his lone grave shall be
A seamark set forevermore,

High on a peak adrift with mist,
And round whose bases, far beneath
The snow-white wheeling tropic birds,
The emerald dragon breaks his teeth.

The two published parts of Mr. Carman's unfinished trilogy on Matthew Arnold, one of which appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* for April 1889, and the other in the *Universal Review* for November of the same year, are not, unfortunately, in this volume, and have never been reprinted. With the permission of the present editor and proprietor of *The Atlantic Monthly* certain

stanzas of the former poem are given here, not only because *Death in April* was the first of Mr. Carman's poems to be widely published, but because it is written in a style not represented in any of his books and is not easily accessible.

O Mother England, bow thy reverend head
    This April morning. Over Northlands wan
Midspring comes back to freshen thee once more,
With daisies on the mounds of thy loved dead,
    Like Chaucer's benediction from the dawn,
Or his, ah me! who down thy forest floor
    Went yestereven. Now
In vain thou art regirdled, as alone
    Of all the elder lands or younger thou
    With hawthorn spray canst be,—that weariless
Eternal charm of thine, thou home of blown
    Seafarers in the storm through dark and stress.

Ah, Cumner, Cumner, where is morning now?
    A nightwatch did he bide with thee, but who
Hath his clear prime? Perchance the great dead Names,
Wide-bruited, shall restore thee him, if thou
    His captive flight with ransom flowers pursue
And gleaming swallows down the glittering Thames
    Where the long sea-winds go.
In vain, in vain! To the hid wells of tears
    In their hot waste thou canst not journey so,
    Nor make leap up the old desire outworn;
For Corydon is dead these thousand years,—
    Dear Corydon who died this April morn.

O mother April, mother of all dreams,
    Child of remembrance, mother of regret,

Inheritor of silence and desire,
Who dost revisit now forsaken streams,
    Canst thou, their spirit, evermore forget
How one sweet touch of immemorial fire
    Erewhile did use to flush
The music of their wells, as sunset light
    Is laid athwart the springtime with keen hush!
    Being so gracious and so loved, hast thou
In all thy realm no shelter from the night
    Where Corydon may keep with Thyrsis now?

Hast thou some far sequestering retreat
    We can but measure by the pause and swing
Of old returning seasons filled with change?
When far from this world, whither do thy feet
    Lead thee upon the margins of the spring?
Through what calm lulls of weather dost thou range
    In smiling reverie,
Between the crisp of dawn and noon's white glare?
    Beyond the borders of the wintry sea,
    Remembering those who loved thy garment's hem
As children love the oxeyes, dost thou there
    Reserve a shadow of content for them?

O mother April, mother of all dreams,
    In thy far dwelling keepest thou for him
Such hospitable bounty? Hast thou there
A welcome of seclusion and sweet streams
    Of sheer blue waters, at whose running brim,
Under the gold of that enchanted air,
    Thy frail windflowers are spread?
Crown with thy smile the end of his rare quest,
    And cherish on thy knees that holiest head;
    Sweet mother, comfort his dear spirit now
With perfect calm, with long-abiding rest,
    And that love thou canst tend him,—only thou!

We muse and muse, and never quite forego
The sure belief in thy one home at last.
The years may drive us with dull toil and blind,
Till age bring down a covering like snow
Of many winters, yet the pausing blast
Hath rifts of quiet, and the frozen wind
Zones of remindful peace;
Then, while some pale green twilight fades to gold,
There comes a change, and we have found release
In the old way at thy returning hands.
Forever in thy care we grow not old,
No barrows of the dead are in thy lands.

Awhile within the roaring iron house
He toiled to thrill the bitter dark with cheer;
But ever the earlier prime wrapped his white soul
In sure and flawless welfare of repose,
Kept like a rare Greek song through many a year
With Chian terebinth,—an illumined scroll
No injury can deface.
And men will toss his name from sea to sea
Along the wintry dusk a little space,
Till thou return with flight of swallow and sun
To weave for us the rain's hoar tracery,
With blossom and dream unravelled and undone.

We joy in thy brief tarrying, and beyond,
The vanished road's end lies engulfed in snow,
Far on the mountains of the bleak new morn.
Craving the light, yet of the dark more fond,
Abhorring and desiring do we go,—
A cruse of tears, and love with leaven of scorn,
Mingled for journey fare;
While in the vision of a harvest land

We see thy river wind, and, looming there,
Death walk within thy shadow, proudly grim,
A little dust and sleep in his right hand,—
The withered windflowers of thy forest dim.

Concerning this poem James Russell Lowell wrote to Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who was then editor of *The Atlantic*: "*Death in April* gave me great pleasure. Too intricate and even obscure I thought it here and there, but perhaps the intricacy is of forest-boughs, and the obscurity nothing more than the gloom which they teach light to counterfeit. Never mind, 'tis the Muse's utterance." The influence of Arnold's *Scholar Gypsy* and *Thyrsis* upon the poem is obvious enough, but even they have not, except in here and there a line, its large nobility of utterance. Without any doubt that his later style and simpler measures are more peculiarly his own, one feels a certain regret in reading *Death in April* that Mr. Carman has never done other things of the same sort.

A Winter Holiday is the record in verse of a trip to the Bahaman Islands and of a short stay in White Nassau—a book of travel sketches. One poem, *Flying Fish,* stands vividly forth in this little book, a gleaming marvel of dexterous craftsmanship in words:

Where the Southern liners go,
In the push of the purple seas,
When sky and ocean merge
Their blue immensities,

A creature novel and fine
Will break from the foam and play,
Swift as a leaf on the wind,
Part of the light and spray.

Will scud like a gust of snow,
Silver diaphonous things,
As if, when the sun gave will,
The sea for his part gave wings.

For aeons the Titan deep
Forged and fashioned and framed,
In the great water-mills,
Forms that no man has named.

With hammer of thunderous seas,
With smooth attrition of tides,
Shaping each joint and valve,
Putting the heart in their sides,

Blindly he laboured and slow,
With patience ungrudging and vast,
Moulding the marvels he wrought
Nearer some purpose at last,

Not his own. Those creatures of his
Were endowed with an alien spark,
And a hint of groping mind
That made for an unseen mark.

For part was the stroke of force,
Fortuitous, blind, and fell,
And part was the breath of soul
Inhabiting film and cell.

Finer and frailer they grew;
Must dare and be glad and aspire,

Out of the nether gloom
Into the pale sea-fire,

Out of the pale sea-day
Into the sparkle and air,
Quitting the elder home
For the venture bright and rare.

Ah, Silver-fin, you too
Must follow the faint ahoy
Over the welter of life
To radiant moments of joy!

In the first of the five books which were brought together under the general title *Pipes of Pan* the poet turns definitely to the ancient classics for subject matter and for models of form. In *The Book of Myths,* also, the didactic bent of his work in the second period is for the first time clearly evident. One is made to feel for the first time in this book, moreover, a certain lack of coherence, a tendency to over-word the thought. Several of the poems are clearly too long. The first poem, for example, although it has no narrative element, extends to nearly five-hundred lines. Mr. Carman has shown in scores of poems, particularly in the *Songs of the Sea Children,* unusual powers of compression, but those powers are not evident in *The Book of Myths.* Here he seems to depend for his effects rather upon accumulation of details than upon selection. He believes, and no doubt rightly, that a main service of rhythm, rhyme, and meter in poetry is to charm and lull

our work-a-day moods into sleep, "to elude the too vigilant reason and so gain instant access to the spirit." This, obviously, is not very different from what Coleridge meant by "temporary suspension of disbelief." Mr. Carman has expressed his opinion clearly in one of his prose essays: "Just as I had to mesmerize myself with the cadence of my lines before I could fully express my whole nature, so you in turn as reader would have to feel their undefinable magic before you could appreciate and enjoy my poems to the utmost capacity of your nature. I could only secure this result through the senses, through the monotonous music of my verse. This may seem to you nothing more than the wisdom of the snake-charmer. Well, that is all it is. But that is enough."

There is no serious objection to be taken to this theory, but its author would readily admit that it may be carried too far. One observes that the tendency to sing on on on, as though the poet had been too completely mesmerized by the cadence of his own lines, is observable only in the rhymed poems, and chiefly in those written in the octosyllabic line. In rhymeless stanzas, where the form is largely determined by thought rather than by sound, Mr. Carman's work is always succinct, close-knit, beautifully proportioned. *The Lost Dryad,* an unrhymed but stanzaic poem in the book under discussion, is an admirable example of what may be called thought architecture, and the *Dead Faun,* the finest poem in the volume, is not a line too long or too short.

Of *The Green Book of the Bards* perhaps enough has already been said. It is composed entirely of nature poems, many of which are pure songs of delight in the bounty of Earth, but others show the increasing grip upon the poet's mind of certain metaphysical ideas. The five poems entitled *Among the Aspens* are certainly the best things in the book, conveying as they do at one and the same time a feeling of closest intimacy with nature and a sense of her unapproachable mystery.

Songs of the Sea Children, a strangely entitled sheaf of one hundred and twenty love songs, is by all odds the most beautiful and perhaps also the most impressive of all Bliss Carman's books. The faults of didacticism and of sprawl which are to be seen elsewhere in the work of this second period find no entrance here. Every poem in the book is pure and flawless and unalloyed song, exclusively lyrical. This book alone would ensure the lasting fame of the man who wrote it. He is known to-day only as a nature poet, and yet the *Songs of the Sea Children,* his best book, is centered entirely about the theme of love. In this fact as well as in the general ignorance even among his admirers of *Behind the Arras* one sees evidence that his range is not yet found, that he has not yet fully entered into his reputation. No one who has read this volume can be disposed to accuse the poet of any deficiency in human interest. Here the abstruse thought of some of the nature poems gives place to passion and beauty finds room for human

meaning. No one can say that the poet's thought has mastered his art who has seen these shining things, each as compact as a diamond and as clear as a dew-drop.

Amid much that is merely decorative in these poems there are spear thrusts of imagination and of passion that pierce to the very heart of emotional reality. Before they were composed, the poet had written somewhat of women and of love, but always in a detached and dreamy way, as though to fill in what would otherwise have been a noticeable gap in his repertoire. It was thus, no doubt, that *Marian Drury, Golden Rowan,* and *Why* were composed—most enchanting verbal music, but little more. Like Tennyson's early poems about girls, they weave a tapestry of words between the poet and his subject, although they differ from Tennyson's poems in attempting no characterization. The tapestry is beautiful in itself, but it conceals. They have little of real imagination but much of the whimsical fancy which obscures its object by calling to mind all the things it may be remotely likened to. There is slightly more warmth, perhaps, in the rollicking gypsy love of *The Wayland Willows,* and the touch-and-go spirit of the rover is rendered with perfect grace in *Under the Rowans*:

> I saw a little river
> Running beside a wall,
> And over it hung scarlet
> The berried rowans tall.

Beside it for a moment
The summer-time delayed;
And cooler fell the sunlight
Through centuries of shade.

And there was laughing Bronwen
A-wading to the knee,
While still the foolish water
Went racing to the sea.

I whistled, "Love, come over!"
She was too wild to fear
The wildness of the forest,
The ruin of the year.

And when the stars above us
Hung in the rowans high,
It was the little river
That made our lullaby.

Indoors, to-night, and fire-dreams!
And where I wander far
Within a shining country
That needs no calendar,

There is a little river
Running beside a wall,
And over it hang scarlet
The berried rowans tall.

The undeniable charm of these verses is due of course, in large part, to their lightness of touch. One sees that the poet is toying with his subject, that his heart is not deeply engaged. In the *Songs of the Sea Children* this is not so. One cannot doubt for a moment the

reality, whether imaginative or actual, of the emotional experiences which they record. Many of them, to be sure, are light and whimsical, but the total effect is one of stark sincerity. Copyright restrictions most unfortunately forbid quotations from this volume, but any one who turns its pages will see that it runs the entire range of love's wide gamut, from the idle light-o'-love fancies of a summer's day to the overwhelming might of passion.

Songs From a Northern Garden, which appeared one year after *Songs of The Sea Children,* is so different from that book that it would hardly seem to have come from the same pen. Most of the poems in this collection are inordinately long, and thought takes the place of song in most of them. The best poem of the thirteen is *Above the Gaspereau,* strangely but effectively rhymed and in long looping lines, a memorandum of the poet's brooding during an Acadian summer on the patient processes of nature.

The Book of Valentines is more various in contents than most of the poet's other volumes, containing in *Yvanhoé Ferrara* a poem which might have found place in *Low Tide on Grand Pré* three or four poems which would not have been out of place in the Vagabondia series, two ballads, three poems in the mood of *Behind the Arras,* several pieces with the flavor of Robert Browning, and finally one great poem in blank verse, the summit of Bliss Carman's poetical achievement, *At the*

Great Release. Nature, love, and religion are brought together and fused in the powerful focus of this poem. Splendor of imagery, nobility of diction, perfection of form, tenderness and passion thrilling from end to end, assure every worthy reader that these thirty-five lines can never be forgotten. As yet, to be sure, they are not known; but they can afford to bide their time. If all the thousand other poems Bliss Carman has written were to be lost, *At the Great Release* would ensure his lasting fame.

The one hundred lyrics of *Sappho* may be regarded as in some ways a continuation of the *Songs of the Sea Children,* for they are all love songs, and all very brief. They belong, however, to a type of poetry which has very few if any other exemplars. Neither translations nor paraphrases—although in many lines they follow the original closely—they are an attempt to complete and fill out the Sapphic fragments in the spirit of the originals. The poet's effort in making them was somewhat like that of a sculptor who might strive to carve a statue from the hint given him by some battered and broken fragment which bore the mark of Praxiteles. It was an attempt at poetical restoration. The rhymeless stanzas of the book are precisely the form in which Mr. Carman's best technical work has been done, for in them the pattern must be constructed out of thought and there is no temptation to amplify, reaching on from rhyme to rhyme. These chaste and quiet stanzas with their effect of per-

fect spontaneity have the unobtrusive beauty of Collins' *Ode to Evening,* which is written in the same simple-looking but very difficult form. The hundred lyrics taken together make a less brilliant effect, certainly, than do the *Songs of the Sea Children,* but one feels little hesitation in saying that *Sappho* follows immediately after that volume among the three best books of poems that Mr. Carman has given to the world. Widely read in England, where it has gone through several editions, *Sappho* is not well known in America because, like *Behind the Arras* and *Songs of the Sea Children,* it has not been easy to get.

The Rough Rider, like the *Book of Valentines,* is less a unit in tone and subject matter than the other volumes. In some of the poems, particularly in those concerned with national holidays, one finds it a little difficult to recognize the author of *Low Tide on Grand Pré,* for the accent of magic is not heard in them. *Easter Eve, Resurgam,* and *On Ponus Ridge* atone for all deficiencies elsewhere, however, by their triumphant utterance of the poet's final spiritual faith, and *In Gold Lacquer* has much of the earlier witchcraft.

Daughters of Dawn and *Earth Deities* stand by themselves as designed primarily for public reading. They are, so to speak, dance librettos, poems to be acted, little masques. The poems are slightly dramatic in form but prevailingly lyrical in spirit. The earlier volume traces the growth of woman's influence in eleven

episodes, beginning with Eve and extending to Vittoria Colonna. The second deals with the spirits of earth. These two books reveal no important development in the poet's thought and they are interesting chiefly as novel and daring experiments in a new form of art. In the writing of both of them Mr. Carman collaborated with his friend Mary Perry King, and the poems were made for use in her new educational movement, in which the three rhythmic arts, poetry, music and dancing, or interpretative motion, are combined for artistic and cultural purpose. In this new art "spoken verse is furthered simultaneously by adapted music and rhythmic motion, which may or may not include dancing," and the small motion dramas which are thus composed are called Rhythmics.

If little is said in this place about the four prose books—*Kinship of Nature, Friendship of Art, Poetry of Life,* and *Making of Personality*—that should not be interpreted to mean that they are thought to be of little importance. They are, indeed, very helpful if not quite necessary to full understanding of the poetry. Most of the essays in these volumes were composed for periodical publication, and there is consequently no extended development of thought in them, at least in the first three. We do not reasonably expect, however, to find a steady expansion of thought in a book of essays, but only, at the best, unity in the several parts. Each essay in these books, taken by itself, is globed, complete,

and whole turning upon its own axis. The lack of linear development is not a defect but a virtue, if properly considered. Mr. Carman's thought does not proceed, apparently, in a straight line but returns upon itself, moving circularly about a few central principles. Unlike the minds most characteristic of our time, he seeks not the Many but the One, and is constantly striving away from bewildering multiplicity and toward unity. While other men try all things and never have done with trying, he is more than content to hold fast that which he has found true. Very few major ideas are presented in these prose books, therefore, but we are constantly made to see by dint of ever varied repetition how these, like mighty wide-spreading vines springing from a few roots, have involved and intertwisted the whole forest of his mind. Over and over, but with no suggestion of monotony, he rings the changes upon the tri-unity of body, mind, and soul, seeming, like a Welsh bard, to see the universe in triads. In nature, in art, in religion, but most of all in human beings, he perceives the ordained poise of sense, thought, and spirit. One sees in reading these books that the number of a man's ideas is less significant than what they are and what he does with them. If he has groped sufficiently close to the simple heart of reality in finding them, he will have but few. The wisest, perhaps, will need only one.

The four prose books were written, as one would expect, in Mr. Carman's second period, the period of

rationalizing, or clear and abstract thinking. One is not surprised, therefore, to find that the style in which they are written is remarkable first of all for its pellucid clarity. Yet it is at first thought a surprising style for a poet to have written, almost devoid of striking images, nearly rhythmless, straight-grained and severe. One surmises that it was conceived on the sound principle that prose and poetry should be kept as far apart as possible, and also that it owes much to the example of Matthew Arnold. Its virtues are those proper to English prose of the Dryden rather than the Sir Thomas Browne tradition. It is the prose of thought rather than of feeling, and there is evidence of "fundamental brain-work" on every page. We may be sure, of course, that its clarity and simplicity was not achieved without severe effort. "If a man will abandon verse and betake himself to the freedom of prose," he says, "he will find the burden of art laid upon him more than twice as heavy as before. He is cast utterly upon his own resources, and yet the obligations of his art are not diminished one jot. There is the same old tale of illusion and atmosphere to be made up, and not a shred of material in stock. One thinks of prose as the simplest, most natural means of expression, and of poetry as laboured in comparison. I fancy, however, that if we could interrogate those who have been masters of both arts, we should find the reverse to be true. "Prose is toil," they would say, "while poetry is play."

Later volumes of verse such as *Echoes From Vagabondia* and *April Airs,* since they contain no important departures from the styles and materials with which we have already dealt, need not detain us from a consideration of the kinds of poetry to be found in the poet's books. Mr. Carman himself classifies all his poetry under two heads: poetry of love and poetry of religion. This is made more intelligible by his explanation that nearly all his nature poetry is religious in its intention and ultimate meaning. If we adopt this broad classification we see at once that there are several subsidiary kinds. There is a great difference, for example, between the treatment of love, deeply earnest and thrilling and passionate in some of the *Songs of the Sea Children* and the delicate badinage with which the same theme is treated in the *Book of Pierrot.* The range of the poems of religion, nearly all of which seem at first to be nature poems, is still wider. It is hard to find a place in either group for the memorabilia of *By the Aurelian Wall,* for poems of pure phantasy and verbal magic like *Marian Drury,* for the studies in the occult of *Behind the Arras,* for pieces of grotesque humor such as *The Hearse-Horse,* or for the numerous and important ballads. One may at least say with assurance, however, that the dominating moods are those of love and religion. Of these, the second is by much the more important, the theme of love being treated almost as frequently in a religious aspect as is the theme of nature.

We arrive, then, at something like unity. Religion, in a certain unusual but none the less real sense of the word, is the central and pervading theme of Mr. Carman's poetry. In what sense he himself understands the word may be seen in the following statement: "As we think of the long list of poets whose names still survive, whose words are still alive in our ears, we shall find them dividing themselves mainly into two groups,—the religious poets and the dramatic,—those who were inspired by the moral temper of their time and those who devoted themselves to the entertainment of their fellows. The poet is both prophet and entertainer, both priest and artist. He stands forever the interpreter of nature to men; that is his sacerdotal office. He is also the revealer of men to themselves; that is his business as dramatic artist." If this classification is correct, then it is clear that Mr. Carman must be a religious poet, since there is extraordinarily little of the dramatic in his work.

The assertion that Bliss Carman's poetry is prevailingly religious would raise an incredulous smile on the lips of every man and woman who knows that poetry if one did not hasten on to say that the religious meanings of his work are almost always implicit, that they are never insisted upon. One need scarcely say that there is no tinge of piety in him or that his treatment of religious themes is utterly different from that of Crashaw, Traherne, or Francis Thompson. He is religious in much the same way that Shelley, the alleged and self-

styled atheist, was so. If the word "pantheistic" had not been so soiled by all ignoble use it would be the *mot propre* for the description of his creed; and if the word "mystical" could be made to convey a much stronger emphasis upon the reason than it ordinarily suggests, it too would be a close approximation. Considering the immense number of the "varieties of religious experience," however, such tags and labels are not very helpful even when they seem to fit. One may say with assurance of Bliss Carman that every road of thought and feeling which he travels long enough leads ultimately out and up to the thought of God. The greater number of his poems, of course, record no such travel whatever, but only hints, guesses, queries. They are mere jottings in the great Book of Wonder. The shorter lyrics are no more than glimpses along this and that alluring vista. As with fireflies, we cannot say whither they are moving. But with the aid of the long semi-didactic poems we make out the direction even of these. In such things as *Easter Eve, On Ponus Ridge, Above the Gaspereau,* and *Resurgam,* the religious and transcendental trend of all his thought is revealed and the deeper meaning of even the glancing momentaneous lyrics is clearly shown.

The question is natural and inevitable, what tangencies are there, if any, between the religion shown in this poetry and the religion of the Christian Church. Obviously it would be a mistake to say that Mr. Carman's mind and art are fully characterized by such

words as "pagan" or "Hellenic." The latter word covers, indeed, his poignant sense of the frailty and evanescence of all beautiful things, for it is precisely that sense which gives us the pathos of the Greeks. This is what may be called his October mood. Balancing this, however, is the mood of April, which rests, it may be, upon a beauty quite as transitory, but is nevertheless a forward-looking, riant mood, smiling through tears, its face turned not toward death but toward a larger life. It is crescendo counterpoising diminuendo, Christian hope for the eneffable future completing pagan passion for the beautiful and fleeting world that now is. Frailty and failure, decay and death,—these tinge with mystery and pathos all the poet's thought, and yet, although he does not face them with the robustious swagger of Robert Browning and his poetical younglings, they do not disturb the indomitable optimism of his deeper musings. In this Aprilian mood the inchoate, unformed, and imperfect are to him only an earnest of a necessary perfection lying beyond, not in the past as with Plato, but in the future, as in the Christian poets.

Besides this faith and aspiration growing out of the very materials for despair, one may characterize as Christian the free and extensive use of symbols in Bliss Carman's poetry of Nature. To the ancient poets Nature was so nearly all that they could treat her simply and for her own sole sake, and the chief reason why they seem to us scarcely to have seen her at all is that

they saw so little else; but we of to-day, living as we do in two worlds, out of one of which came all our speech and the other of which is almost wordless, have been forced to warp the world of eye and ear to uses of which it knows nothing, using nature as a metaphor of soul. Thus it is that our poetry of earth's beauty becomes in the end, or in the proportion that it approaches the end, religious. Thoughts of this kind may have been in the poet's mind when he wrote, recently, his *Vestigia*:

I took a day to search for God,
And found Him not. But as I trod
By rocky ledge, through woods untamed,
Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
I saw His footprint in the sod.

Then suddenly, all unaware,
Far off in the deep shadows, where
A solitary hermit thrush
Sang through the holy twilight hush—
I heard His voice upon the air.

And even as I marvelled how
God gives us heaven here and now,
In a stir of wind that hardly shook
The poplar leaves beside the brook—
His hand was light upon my brow.

At last with evening as I turned
Homeward, and thought what I had learned
And all that there was still to probe—
I caught the glory of his robe
Where the last fires of sunset burned.

Back to the world with quickening start
I looked and longed for any part
In making saving Beauty be—
And from that kindling ecstasy
I knew God dwelt within my heart.

Neither in this poem nor anywhere else does Mr. Carman define his belief in hard and fast terms, for he feels that such definitions are not conducive to growth. "Creeds," he says, "are but inns upon the road to perfection. We are all higher vagabonds, putting up now with one host and now with another. Modern science has brought us no greater good than this temper of toleration, this tentative moral condition, this faith which is strong yet flexible. Between science and religion there can never be any quarrel. Between science and formalism there can be neither compromise nor peace." Matthew Arnold saw the doom of religion in its insistence upon the fact, or the supposed fact, and he predicted that poetry would take its place because it attaches its emotion to the idea, which science cannot attack, rather than to the fact which science was even in his time destroying. Mr. Carman, who has learned much from Matthew Arnold, has not seen the necessity of abandoning religion for poetry because he has attached religion itself not to fact but to idea. He might agree with Arnold that "the strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry," but he would rather say that the strongest part of our poetry is its unconscious religion.

Although he uses nature, like all other Christian poets, as a symbol of spirit, Bliss Carman sees the natural object vividly and clearly, like a Greek, as it really is. His faculty of clear vision separates him sharply from writers of the Celtic tradition and from the more extreme poets of romanticism. In the same flash of thought in which he sees the object thus vividly, however, he sees it also as a symbol of something else. This parabolic method in the treatment of nature is subtly different from both the mythopoeic and the metaphoric, being less free and expansive than the one and less conscious and decorative than the other. It is not, of course, peculiar to him or to any school of poetry. Rather it is due to habits of mind deeply ingrained in us all by the long teaching of Christianity. "The Greek," says Sidney Lanier, "believed the stream to be inhabited by a nymph, and the stream was wonderful to him because of this nymph, but the modern man believes no such thing. One has appeared who continually cried love, love, love—love God, love neighbors, and these 'neighbors' have come to be not only man-neighbors, but tree-neighbors, river-neighbors, star-neighbors."

The pervading symbolism of modern poetry scarcely attracts our notice now because all creation has become for us in some deep sense a symbol. The mere naming of a tree, a flower, a woman, is for us in itself a metaphor, crowds of responsive echoes in the many-tongued instrument of the modern mind springing into life about

the one note which is struck. For "when the mind opens and reveals the laws which traverse the universe," as Emerson once said, "the great world shrinks at once into a mere illustration and fable of this mind."

From its pervading religious intention Mr. Carman's poetry gains a unity not consciously planned but the natural result of an unusually normal thought history. Realizing this unity of theme, we see that he is no mere mural decorator but that he has himself built the walls which he paints. He constructs before he colors. In other words, he has not been content, like the Imagists, to produce the world he sees about him, nor has he thought it a man's work to garnish that world with false and lying colors like the aesthetes; but rather he has been moved, in the measure of his strength,

> To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire . . .
> And then re-mold it nearer to the heart's desire.

Thus he has given himself not to this or that part of the poet's work but to all of it. He has tried to make his poetry a clear mirror of his mind in a time when most poets have taken perverse delight in offering the world only shattered bits of brilliant but meaningless glass.

After having spoken of the unity of Mr. Carman's work one must go on as nearly as possible in the same breath to point out also its variety—that true variety as distinguished from mere miscellaneity which is

secured only under the control of some single governing principle. Out of his religious theme it is clear that he has evolved a symphony of very rich beauty and of manifold significance. Or perhaps the metaphor by which Wordsworth likened his own work to a cathedral would serve the purpose better. Perhaps it would not be too fantastic a comparison to think of Bliss Carman's poetry as a Gothic cathedral with soaring pinnacles and deep-sunk crypts, with altars for prayer and niches for many a modern and usually feminine saint. Only let it never be forgotten that this cathedral is based solidly upon the brown substantial earth, and that it is crowned by the gargoyle to keep us always mindful of our frame that we are dust. The whole structure of this religion and this poetry is earth-born. It would be unpardonable to leave the impression that because Bliss Carman's work is religious in its ultimate meanings it is therefore in any way or degree abstract. Excepting only those poems in which a didactic purpose has triumphed over poetry, his work is all compact of color, sound, odor, form. It stands the crucial test of poetry, being composed entirely of sense images, replete with sense impressions, drenched in sensation, contentedly ignorant of any other poetic language than that of sense.

The variety of Mr. Carman's work is almost as likely to escape notice as its unity. The early and enduring popularity of the Vagabondia series has given many readers their only idea of what he can do. The volumes

of that series caught the mood of the moment and have never ceased to be popular, because they chime with our belief that art should soothe and amuse us when we are worn by the struggle of life, but that it should leave the purposes and conduct of that life severely alone, asking no disturbing questions. For significant reasons, we have accepted the poet's youthful songs of care-free and thought-free vagabondage and have ignored his poetry of thought and of restraint, true in this to our national predilection for all that is green and growing and our inability to comprehend what is really ripe and mature.

Some part of the blame for our failure to realize the range of Bliss Carman's work must be borne, however, by the poet himself. In the prefatory note to the first edition of his first volume he wrote: "The poems in this volume have been collected with reference to their similarity of tone. They are variations on a single theme, more or less aptly suggested by the title, *Low Tide on Grand Pré*. It seemed better to bring together between the same covers only those pieces of work which happened to be in the same key, rather than to publish a larger book of more uncertain aim." To this method he has adhered more or less rigidly ever since. Much has been gained by it for the unity of individual volumes, but much has been lost also for the poet's reputation, since the only way of discovering the extraordinary scope and range of his work has been that of reading

all, or very nearly all, his books. His work can be justly estimated only in its totality, and each of the widely different kinds of writing represented in his many books must be considered in any real estimate of him. Few readers, probably, have ever earned the right to speak of him with real authority.

Not only has this method of publication retarded the poet's reputation; it has rendered some of the individual volumes monotonous in effect. Twenty variations upon one tune with very minute and gradual modulations from key to key, leave a final impression less sharply defined than the original theme might have given if left to stand alone. As one reads a volume of verse put together on this principle he is likely to feel that the poet is suffering with some mild obsession or monomania. There seems to be little range or reach in his thought. Because of the lack of contrast in mood and material the reader comes to forget and ignore the poet's subject and to surrender himself to the intoxication of rhythm and the wavering phantasmagoria of poetic images. He loses sight of the fact that few poets are able to publish book after book of monotones, each distinct from the others. He finds the constant succession of the same sort of stimuli ultimately equivalent to no stimuli whatever, and concludes that this poet has little to say.

A selected edition of Mr. Carman's poems, arranged with an eye to contrast and variety, is for these reasons

much to be desired. Such a book would do for his work much the same sort of service that Matthew Arnold's anthology did for that of Wordsworth. It would present him in a new light, as a poet of very extraordinary range, and as one who has done memorable work in each of the many kinds of poetry he has written. His work has much to gain and nothing to lose from the lightening necessary to almost any poetic cargo which is to make a long journey across the years.

IV

Nature

Blow, blow till there be
Inbreathed in me
Tinge of the loam and tang of the sea,—
A vagrom man
Favored of Pan,
Made out of ardor and sinew and tan.

IV

Nature

"IF ever there was a child of Nature," said William Sharp, "it is the author of *The End of the Trail.*" Realization that Mr. Carman's nature poetry is religious in its larger meanings should not obscure its interest and value in and for itself, for his symbolism, as we have seen, never blurs his vision of the actual image. He was, in fact, first of all a poet of nature, and the religion of his maturity came to him, it would seem, chiefly through the doors of sense. He has himself said that "the physical side of personality is the only soil and substance through which the spiritual and intellectual life are reinforced." This is only saying again that the whole structure of his thought is earth-born. The senses are to him the gates opening out from mind and spirit upon the material world; but opening inward also, for they can swing both ways. His poetry is merely the music of a ceaseless come-and-go through those swinging doors. Poetry results, both in his theory and in his practice, from the union of sense and spirit governed by reason, and it is in this union that nature and religion become for him really one experience. Religion, he feels, is no more than spirit's view of nature, and nature

is only sense's view of religion. And yet it is clear that his experience of nature was first in the order of time. He gazed at the visible world so long and earnestly that at last he could not stop short of a religious interpretation of what he saw.

The sense of transcendental meanings in the material world, which is almost as old as consciousness itself and certainly as old as poetry, appears to be a direct perception or intuition; but because direct perception and intuition have an extremely meagre vocabulary poets have been speaking ever since the time of Heracleitus of the "teaching of nature," as though there were something analagous in the process to the action of one mind upon another. But it seems very doubtful whether even the most loving and intent study of nature can ever teach us anything save natural truth, whether it can do more than elicit and brighten such truths of the moral order as are already in the mind. Although he returned in a later poem to the more conventional view, Coleridge, in his *Dejection, An Ode,* once gave clear expression to the simple truth:

> I may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.
> O Lady! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live:
> Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!

And Emerson, although he too made frequent use of

the fallacy, once phrased what seems to be the truth with trenchant beauty:

> As sunbeams stream through liberal space
> And nothing jostle or displace,
> So waved the pine-tree through my thought,
> And fanned the dreams he never brought.

Nature is so apt a metaphor of the mind partially because it is the matrix in which mind has been nourished and formed, but it is scarcely a preceptress dealing in abstract homily. Strive as we may, it is hard to get anything but dreamy nonsense out of Wordsworth's assertion that

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can.

Wordsworth may have written that famous quatrain, as some one has suggested, in one of his extremely rare moods of humorous trifling; he may not have intended that it should be read as an expression of his serious thought; he may have used the word "impulse," as he does elsewhere, in a very special sense; but the important fact is that he did not in these four lines tell the truth. And yet it is almost impossible for a poet who tries to treat nature in a higher than descriptive way to avoid phraseology which suggests didactic instruc-

tion. By the very nature of his work, Mr. Carman has pretty constantly faced this difficulty, and with varying success. For the most part he takes only suggestion and intimations and corroborations from these

> dumb and tiny creatures
> Of flower and blade and sod,
> That dimly wear the features
> And attributes of God.

As a rule, they do no more for him than to suggest the truths of which he is already aware. An admirable example of this is found in *Pulvis et Umbra.* In this gravely beautiful and noble poem there is no such crude turning from text to homily as we have in Holmes'

> Thanks for the message brought by thee,
> Child of the wandering sea.

The poet does not pretend that the great gray moth which is the hero of the poem actually teaches him anything, but he makes us feel that it has hinted to him many things. In the first stanzas a dim analogy is suggested between the straying creature of the night and the ever questioning spirit of man, but the likeness is so little stressed that it seems to have been scarcely conscious, at first, in the poet's mind.

> Where the sea with her old secret
> Moves in sleep and cannot rest,
> From that dark beyond my doorway,
> Silent, the unbidden guest

Came and tarried, fearless, gentle,
Vagrant of the starlit gloom,
One frail waif of beauty fronting
Immortality and doom.

Through the chambers of the twilight
Roaming from the vast outland,
Resting for a thousand heart-beats
In the hollow of my hand.

The analogy is not sought, apparently, but it is nevertheless inevitable that the thought of the moth's fellow-farer through the dark should find place in the poem.

For man walks the world with mourning,
Down to death, and leaves no trace,
With the dust upon his forehead
And the shadow in his face.

Pillared dust and fleeing shadow
As the roadside wind go by,
And the fourscore years that vanish
In the twinkling of an eye.

Comrade of the dust, forever
I pursue the endless way
Of the dust and shadow kindred.
Thou art perfect for a day.

Yet from beauty marred and broken,
Joy and memory and tears,
I shall crush the clearer honey
In the harvest of the years.

For man walks the world in twilight,
But the morn shall wipe all trace
Of the dust from off his forehead
And the shadow from his face.

There is little direct description of nature in Bliss Carman's poetry. He identifies himself, so to speak, with the object, merging himself into it, seeming to pierce to the heart and inner nature of flower and tree and to become, as it were, a thinking tree, a feeling flower. If this seems at first an extravagant statement, a very early poem, *A Wind-flower,* will show what is meant:

Between the roadside and the wood,
Between the dawning and the dew,
A tiny flower before the sun,
Ephemeral in time, I grew.

And there upon the trail of spring,
Not death nor love nor any name
Known among men in all their lands
Could blur the wild desire with shame.

But down my dayspan of the year
The feet of straying winds came by;
And all my trembling soul was filled
To follow one lost mountain cry.

And then my heart beat once and broke
To hear the sweeping rain forebode
Some ruin in the April world,
Between the woodside and the road.

To-night can bring no healing now;
The calm of yesternight is gone;
Surely the wind is but the wind
And I a broken waif thereon.

The secret, apparently, of the strange and eerie effects so often found in Bliss Carman's nature poetry, is sympathy with what we are pleased to call "the lower world" seldom equalled among modern poets. This sympathy leads at times to what almost seems an interpenetration of mind and matter:

I blend with the soft shadows
Of the young maple leaves,
And mingle in the rain-drops
That shine along the eaves.

I lapse among the grasses
That green the river's brink;
And with the shy wood creatures
Go down at need to drink.

I fade in silver music,
Whose fine unnumbered notes
The frogs and rainy fifers
Blow from their reedy throats.

No glory is too splendid
To house this soul of mine,
No tenement too lowly
To serve it for a shrine.

This intimacy of understanding which is found in the best of the nature poetry surprises meanings which

have been dwelling long in the shadowed fringes of consciousness, but which we have never clearly seen before. Bliss Carman writes of nature as we might expect a faun to do, or as one of those gnomes of Icelandic fable who emerged suddenly from the lichened rock and then faded back into it again. He seems less a spectator of nature than a participant, a collaborator with it. Like William Blake, he does not see *with* his eyes so much as *through* them—that is, there seems to be no middle term between spirit and substance. In his poetry rock and stream and tree slip from their old strange bondage of silence and are vocal at last. He is that musical instrument shaped by the great god Pan "down in the reeds by the river," and played upon by all the spirits of the wilderness.

This interpenetration and union of the poet's mind with its object in nature is inadequately phrased in the terminology of kinship which he uses to express, or rather to suggest it. The emotional experience he is trying to record seems frequently much more than that, and to approach a sense of identity. When in the lyric mood he does not distinguish sharply between his human consciousness and the materials of sense which it contains. The vernal and autumnal tides of the year flow through him as imperiously as they do through meadow and forest. All this is clearly evident in one of his most familiar poems:

Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!
When thy flowery hand delivers
All the mountain-prisoned rivers,
And thy great heart beats and quivers
To revive the days that were.
Make me over, mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!

. . . .

Make me over in the morning
From the rag-bag of the world!
Scraps of dream and duds of daring,
Home-brought stuff from far sea-faring,
Faded colours once so flaring,
Shreds of banners long since furled!
Hues of ash and glints of glory,
In the rag-bag of the world.

. . . .

Only make me over, April,
When the sap begins to stir!
Make me man or make me woman,
Make me oaf or ape or human,
Cup of flower or cone of fir;
Make me anything but neuter
When the sap begins to stir!

If it is true to say that Bliss Carman's poetry frequently expresses a feeling of identity with nature, then it is clear how and why that poetry is religious. He makes no distinction between the spirit of nature and the spirit *in* nature, and he feels that the ecstasy with which the soul of man goes forth through the doors of

sense to its union with the beauty of the outer world is an earnest that it is really going forth to a mystic union with the Divine.

We need not expect, under these circumstances, to find in this poetry the close and extended description of landscape which we find in Wordsworth and Keats and Tennyson. Because he is chiefly concerned with mood and atmosphere, Mr. Carman paints few clear-cut pictures, and he speaks in generalities of rivers, trees, and hills, not of a single and specific tree, hill, or river. His epithets seldom particularize. Color, form, and motion he records mistily, as a rule, and as though from a distance. There is evidence enough that this is not due to lack of interest or ability. Such lines, for example, as

> Over the floating lilies
> The dragon-fly tacks and steers

have the sheer virtuosity of eye and pen that we associate with the name of John Keats. The two verbs are almost miraculously right. Again, for a union of strange metaphor with close observation which is worthy of Tennyson, consider the glowing lines describing the tropic dawn:

> On the sea-line, a scarlet seed
> Smoulders and kindles and sets fire
> To the dark selvedge of the night.

Although there is little nature description of the lower order in Bliss Carman's poetry, there is a great

deal of poetic impressionism which aims not so much to bring before us the actual physical look of a landscape as to reveal its inner meaning and its emotional value, make us acquainted with the "spirit of place." Often this is done in a very few words, in two or three suggestive touches, each chosen with unerring instinct, as in the lines:

> Stony uplands where the quail
> Whistle by the pasture rail.

These words do for the alert imagination as much as a hundred words of elaborate description.

An extended use of this method of suggestion in descriptive writing is seen in the poem *In Gold Lacquer* which deals with the Old Manse, the one-time home of Emerson and Hawthorne in Concord. No attempt is made in these lines to render the details of what is seen; only such things are chosen as make clear what is felt. Yet every one who has seen the place must realize that they record in the field proper to poetry a very close and accurate memory.

> Gold are the great trees overhead,
> And gold the leaf-strewn grass,
> As though a cloth of gold were spread
> To let a seraph pass.
> And where the pageant should go by,
> Meadow and wood and stream,
> The world is all of lacquered gold,
> Expectant as a dream.

Against the sunset's burning gold,
Etched in dark monotone
Behind its alley of grey trees
And gateposts of grew stone,
Stands the Old Manse, about whose eaves
An air of mystery clings,
Abandoned to the lonely peace
Of bygone ghostly things.

In molten gold the river winds
With languid sweep and turn,
Beside the red-gold wooded hill
Yellowed with ash and fern.
The streets are tiled with gold-green shade
And arched with fretted gold,
Ecstatic aisles that richly thread
This minster grim and old.

The air is flecked with filtered gold,—
The shimmer of romance
Whose ageless glamour still must hold
The world as in a trance,
Pouring o'er every time and place
Light of an amber sea,
The spell of all the gladsome things
That have been or shall be.

Mr. Carman did not know when he wrote this poem that Sophia Hawthorne had cut with a diamond on the window of her husband's study at the Old Manse her name and the date, with the added words, "In the emerald golden glow." Any one looking out of that western window in the upper room will see precisely what she meant, for in the late afternoon the sun strikes

up from the glassy river into the leaves of the trees behind the house with a curious lacquered mingling of gold and green, and these colors suffuse the entire house at certain times of the day and year.

The effects of the poem just quoted are gained chiefly by a dexterous use of color. In Mr. Carman's early work he paid little attention to this important element of descriptive writing. The use of white—so excessively rare in nature, was then a mannerism. In the Vagabondia series the primary colors are used almost entirely; but under the tutelage of his friend T. B. Meteyard, a pupil of Monet and illustrator of the Vagabondia books, the poet learned to make use of more delicate color distinctions. Perhaps his most effective work in this field is in his most recent work, as in the rhymeless sonnet *Autumn*:

> Now when the time of fruit and grain is come,
> When apples hang above the orchard wall,
> And from the tangle by the road-side stream
> A scent of wild grapes fills the racy air,
> Comes autumn with her sun-burnt caravan,
> Like a long gypsy train with trapping gay
> And tattered colors of the Orient,
> Moving slow-footed through the dreamy hills.
> The woods of Wilton, at her coming, wear
> Tints of Bokhara and of Samarcand;
> The maples glow with their Pompeian red,
> The hickories with burnt Etruscan gold;
> And while the crickets fife along her marsh,
> Behind her banners burns the crimson sun.

Since Mr. Carman has lived his life in a romantic age, it is natural, despite the strong classic trend of his maturer thought, that his sense of outline should be relatively weak. We may some day come to agree with Lessing, however, that word-painting is a mistaken effort, that Horace's *ut pictura poesis* has been misinterpreted, and that poetry belongs with the arts of sound and motion, courting certain failure when it tries to do in words what should be left to brush and chisel. However that may be, it is certain that Mr. Carman's treatment of sound and motion is much more successful and interesting than that of color and form. These, to be sure, are the sense elements which may be imitated in poetry more or less directly, but he is very little concerned with purely imitative effects. There are few cases of obvious onomatopoeia in his verse, and he seldom chooses meters or manipulates single lines with a view to the imitation of motion. His successes seem chiefly due to long and close observation and to choice of exactly fitting or highly suggestive words. The two verbs describing the flight of the dragon-fly which were noticed above are verbs of motion perfectly chosen. The verb of motion is, indeed, one of the most effective of his stylistic tools, and he does with it what other poets do with adverb and adjective. He describes nearly everything in nature as in motion—the "journeying rain," the "streeling clouds," and, by extension into the abstract, the "marching morrows." States of feel-

ing are made vivid by metaphors of motion, and he suggests even perfect quiet of mind and body by use of contrast. The following stanzas, for example, from that weird and unforgettable poem, *The Eavesdropper,* are intended to suggest the absolute stillness and content in the hearts of the two lovers within the quiet room, but the lines themselves are surprisingly full of rustle and stir:

> Outside, a yellow maple tree,
> Shifting upon the silvery blue
> With tiny multitudinous sound,
> Rustled to let the sunlight through.
>
> The livelong day the elvish leaves
> Danced with their shadows on the floor;
> And the lost children of the wind
> Went straying homeward by our door.
>
> And all the swarthy afternoon
> We watched the great deliberate sun
> Walk through the crimsoned hazy world,
> Counting his hill-tops one by one.

Next in importance to his treatment of motion is Mr. Carman's use of sound—of the voices of the winds and the minute whispers, rustlings, soughs, and small pipings which only one man in a thousand ever hears. But always he returns to the wind, which has for him, some mysterious meaning which he probably could not define. Boisterous winds which stir the blood and set heaven and earth in strange commotion can raise all

but the most sodden souls to the level of poetry. Bliss Carman loves the wind not as a trumpet to stir him out of torpor but as a ghostly messenger of wordless tidings. The fifth poem from *Among the Aspens* is the best illustration that could be chosen, but since it is impossible to quote that, the following lines from *Wanderer* must serve:

> Saith the great forest wind and lonely,
> Out of the stars and the wintry hills,
> "Weary, bethink thee of rest, and remember
> Thy waiting auroral Ardise hills!
>
> "Was it not I, when my mother bore thee
> In the sweet, solemn April night,
> Took thee safe in my arms to fondle,
> Filled thy dream with the old delight?
>
> Have I not rocked thee, have I not lulled thee,
> Crooned thee in forest and cradled in foam,
> Then with a smile from the hearthstone of childhood
> Bade thee farewell when thy heart bade thee roam?
>
> Ah, my wide-wanderer, thou blessed vagrant,
> Dear will thy footfall be nearing my door.
> How the glad tears will give vent at thy coming,
> Wayward or sad-heart to wander no more."

The securing of supernatural effects from the treatment of nature itself, awakening echoes in the shadowy caverns underlying both sense and thought, is among the features of Mr. Carman's nature poetry which distinguish it from any other writing of the sort that has

been done in English. Other distinguishing traits have been mentioned. Most nature poets have been spectators; this poet is one with nature, disregarding the barriers between the human observer and the sub-human world. Other poets use nature as a store-house of metaphors that illustrate the workings of the human heart and mind; this poet frequently reverses that process, as did Shelley. In short, Mr. Carman is most clearly original in his nature poetry. He has drawn it from reservoirs that were full almost before he knew that books exist. Here lies his most notable contribution to American literature. In him, at last, American mountains and forest, meadows, and streams, find a voice peculiarly their own.

One result of the pre-occupation with nature in this poetry is seen in the fact that there is in it little direct treatment of men and women. In this respect it reminds us of that part of Shelley's work in which the poet, after the failure of his ardent hopes for the immediate redemption of mankind, fled away from man and all his works. The difference is that there is not a tinge of misanthropy in Bliss Carman's apparent preference for the world of leaf and feather and fin. Furthermore, the lack of direct treatment of human beings does not cause any lack of human interest in his work. On the contrary, he suggests manifold human implications constantly while he is apparently concerned only with sky and earth and sea. Seldom does he write of

nature for nature's sake alone. And then there are important exceptions to be made to the statement that he does not concern himself with men and women. *Earth Deities* and *Daughters of Dawn* deal with nothing else. In the the poignantly human *Book of Pierrot* the beauty of nature is entirely subsidiary to the laughter and tears of human hearts.

V

Art

Slowly, as from out all distance,
Rising far and fine and shrill,
Came a flute-note, strong as sea-wind,
Clear as morning on the hill.

V

Art

BLISS CARMAN'S mastery of verse technic is most evident in what is known by the vague and unsatisfactory term "tone color." Without any intricacy of metrical structure or even extensive use of alliteration, he secures effects deeply and permanently pleasing to the ear, the secret of which seems to be merely an instinctive grouping and contrasting of pure unimpeded vowel sounds. An example of his skill is seen in the quatrain:

> A golden flute in the cedars,
> A silver pipe in the swales,
> And the slow large life of the forest
> Wells back and prevails.

These lines are a leisurely music, quiet and unobtrusive, composed for an instrument no less rare than that provided by a noble voice speaking with pure enunciation. More than that, if they are to make the designed effect there must be a delicate and expert ear to listen, and they must be read slowly, as an epicure savors an ancient wine, with a special lingering upon the clear vowel sounds. When the stanza has been so read, not once but a dozen times, it becomes a little symphony of harmonious bells, a subtly changing music which carries the

meaning of the lines, if one can still attend to that, far into the heart of memory.

Such a reading of even these four lines would bring out the qualities of Bliss Carman's style as no labored exposition could do. It would show how entirely those qualities are derived not from study of the printed page but from life-long study of actual speech. "Literature, like music," he says, "is dependent on writing only as a means for its preservation. All its essential qualities, like those of music, are perceived only when it is reproduced as modified sound." He sees that "poetry is an oral art. And the aspect of it which appeals to the aesthetic sense does so, and can only do so, through the harmonious arrangement of melodious words."

One sees also that this stanza does not show the delicate inlay work of Tennyson or Keats. Bliss Carman does not attempt to "load every rift with ore," and he does not write an anxious or meticulous style. Without any hint of real carelessness, he shows everywhere a certain large and easy mastery, a certain indifference to the minor details of craftsmanship upon which lesser writers expend all their force. Always, therefore, in reading him, one has a feeling of reserve power. Only once or twice, as in *At the Great Release,* does he seem to have gathered all his strength into one effort. His best poems seem not to have been constructed but to have grown, spontaneously, as the gigantic piles of cumulus grow along the horizon on summer afternoons.

The beauty of open and prolongable vowel sounds, among other things, makes the *Songs of the Sea Children* really songs. They revive an ancient tradition, that of the Elizabethan song masters, and one has to go back as far as Nicholas Breton and Dr. Campion, the lutanist poet who set his own words to music and sang them to his own lute, to find their equals in their kind. Since the early seventeenth century and the divorce of poetry from music, the dexterous management of vowels in English verse, despite a few bursts of pure reed music here and there, has been almost a lost art. Poets have relied chiefly upon metrical structure and manipulation of consonants, as the case of Swinburne, who closes this line of development, abundantly shows. They have tried to atone for the loss of musical accompaniment by a greater and greater intricacy of meter and stanzaic structure. But in the older and now recovered style of verse making, metrical structure is usually simple, and one main effort is to keep the consonants as much as possible out of the way, so as to approach the effects of that Italian *bel canto* which the Elizabethan poets had always singing in their ears. One sees that this effort has succeeded in such a quatrain as this:

> In the door of the house of life,
> Beside the fabled sea,
> I am a harp-string in the wind,
> Aeolian for thee.

Most delightful harmonies of vowels are secured here without sacrifice of normal prose order and with that quiet ease, never slipping into carelessness, which one finds in Mr. Carman's best work. He does his best things most easily, at least in appearance, without hurry or waste of effort, and his words seem to bubble from an inexhaustible spring of beauty and to move on their way like a full but smoothly flowing stream.

The influence of Richard Hovey upon some other phases of the poet's technic was undoubtedly important. Although Hovey did not live long enough to work out the conflicting tendencies of his own thought and feeling, it is clear that the main trend of his theories of art—which were always very important to him and very consciously held—was toward strict and carefully studied form. His passion for Walt Whitman, his interest in Verhaeren many years before the Belgian's name was heard in America, his own practice of *vers libre* twenty years before the present movement began among us,—these things may cause momentary doubt; but one who reads his letters and art notes, studies his sonnets, realizes his interest in Delsarte and knows that he left in manuscript a large part of a text book on versification, will see that his early study of the freer forms of verse was merely part of the broad foundation he was laying for a structure never completed. He was, in fact, most deeply influenced by the French Parnassiens, with whom his studies in France brought him in

touch, and the effect of that school upon him must have been almost entirely in the direction of strict form and classic restraint.

Such equipment as this made it possible for Richard Hovey to begin twenty years ago the important effort toward a more easy and supple use of the conventional metric schemes which is producing good results to-day. From the French writers of *vers libre* he gained a notion of form as something other than a rigid and pre-existing mold of thought, and from Whitman he learned the imaginative value of the colloquial. These ideas, which he worked out into clarity and precision by his own unusual faculty for reasoning on aesthetic matters and in many a long conversation with his friend, found a fragmentary and tentative exemplification in the *Songs from Vagabondia.* The volumes of that series must be given a rather important place in any attempt to trace the origins of contemporary modes in American poetry. They contain much free verse and much writing in the stricter forms, but more important than either is that verse which is neither free nor yet strict—that in which the orthodox and traditional meters have undergone the liberating influence of *vers libre* without losing a sufficiently recognizable and satisfying form. This liberation of the conventional syllable-counting line enabled the two poets to achieve with comparative ease one of the cardinal ideals of their poetic theory—the use in verse of a normal prose order. And

this in turn, coupled with the influence of Whitman upon Hovey, suggested and almost necessitated the frequent use of a conversational as opposed to a distinctively poetic diction.

The reader who knows the saccharine prettiness and timid mannerism into which American verse had fallen in the early nineties, and who is able to contrast with this the work of contemporary poets, will be able to estimate the importance for our literature of these three unassuming little volumes. The actual poetic achievement in them may not be very great. No one, indeed, has ever pretended that it was so. There is much mere experimentation, much questing up and down in both form and thought. On one page immature formalism impedes natural expression and on the next a new-found freedom is seen effervescing into license. But the note between these two extremes is often struck, and just this note was what American verse writers most needed to hear.

Two apparently contradictory things must be said about Mr. Carman's verse forms. On the one hand, he has used an extraordinary number of measures and stanzas, ranging from the rhymeless sonnet to free verse. Some of these forms are very difficult, recondite, unusual. On the other hand, the greater part of his poetry is written in the simplest, oldest, and most familiar of English forms—the ballad stanza, or quatrain rhyming on the second and fourth lines. These lines are

usually iambic and of three or four stresses. By the use of trochaic and trisyllabic substitutions, avoided stress, slurring, and elision, the iambic lines are widely varied, and frequently they give almost an anapaestic effect. By skilful use of these devices the poet secures within his simple quatrains much the same range of music that other writers get by the employment of many different measures. In form, then, as in subject matter, his range may be called either wide or narrow, according to the point of view. He seems to be playing on a penny whistle until one hears the tune.

The more difficult and unusual verse structures interest the prosodist more than the general reader. By the very plan of *Daughters of Dawn* and *Earth Deities* the poet was forced to use many different stanzas and meters. There are interesting novelties of versification in *The Red Wolf* and *The Lodger* and in the rhymeless trochaic pentameter of *A Vision of Sappho*. All this, however, is external. The secret of the haunting music in so many of his lines is not revealed by any prosodic scheme, for it lies chiefly in those delicate harmonies of vowel and consonant which have never been and never will be reduced to rule. The purely mechanical element in Mr. Carman's verse is of lesser importance. For that reason his verse will withstand for a long time the examination of pedantic prosodists who imagine, after reducing a poem to a mere succession of longs and shorts, that they have plucked out the heart of its mystery.

Certain passages in a hitherto unpublished letter from Richard Hovey to Bliss Carman contain some interesting comment upon the latter's verse and diction. This letter is eleven closely written pages in length and it deals exclusively with *Beyond the Gamut,* which had been sent to London for Hovey's criticism. As most of the emendation Hovey suggests have been adopted, it is not always possible to find the original readings to which he refers. The letter is quoted here only in part, but *Verbatim.*

"50 Rossetti Mansions
"Chelsea, London,
"13 Jan., 1895.

Dear Bliss;

Your letter about "Beyond the Gamut" seems to give me a free hand, so here goes. It seems to me the stuff for a damn good poem, but it has more technical defects than is at all common in your work. I am going to go through it line by line and see what strikes me in it:

"Stanza 3—

'Which my wiser elders must explore' will *do,* but it is rather prosaic. The idea is all right, but it is stated too directly. There are graver instances of this fault later in the poem. An absolutely unadorned, unfigurative statement, if in itself the idea is essentially poetical, may reach the very heights of poetry. Cf. Lear's 'Pray you, undo this button.' But then the whole poem must be in the same simple manner, or else the transit from symbol, metaphor, indirection, to plain matter of fact must be made by a modulation or for psychological *reasons.* In this poem (and indeed in your general style) the whole atmosphere is metaphor within metaphor and symbol

within symbol, and the *drop* is sudden and motiveless. This particular line, perhaps, does not deserve such a tirade, but it is a weak example of this fault, and I will point out worse ones later.

"Stanza 5—

'Hovering into light from dark profound," is bad. One is left in doubt which is the noun and which the adjective (dark or profound). And in either case the phrase is clumsy. How would it do to read 'from the profound'? But doubtless you can do better.

"Stanza 6—

'The vast theme of God's first symphony'

Why *first*? —While we are on this line, let us take up the meter since this is a variation from the typic line, and a very beautiful one. Catullus has some lovely effects by this same device of substituting an iambus for the first foot of a trochaic line. But later you use a lot of lines that are straight iambic pentameters, and not trochaic at all. Now it is perfectly allowable and even meritorious to introduce redundant syllables and displace the accent *as much as ever you like provided* the character of the rhythm be not changed, e.g. in the present poem trochaic to iambic. But the liberties, or rather the complexer music that varies from type, must be an enriching of the primitive rhythmic idea, not a confusion of it with a different rhythm. In parts of this poem it is difficult to say whether the rhythm is iambic or trochaic, they alternate so rapidly. . . .

"Stanza 8—

"The round earth, too, haply, like a sand-grain"

Good variation—Catullus kind again. But why "sand-grain"? N-D-G-R—four consonants in succession and not with easy gradation of articulation. Try "atom" "dust-mote" "monad" anything else. NDGR *might* express the colossal, never the *tiny*. . . .

"Stanza 12—

The word 'tangible' is mere prose. And the line 'Interpreting one meaning to the heart' is a perfect iambic line. It has no more to do with the music of this poem than a potato-bug with a collection of butterflies. . . .

"Stanza last.—

I prefer the first reading 'fellows' instead of 'brothers.' I prefer the sense as being less sentimental and the sound (you lose only one of your colliterating b's, and you gain the fine sounds l and o in place of the rather inferior th and two dirty-colored vowels. . . .

"Since we are on this subject, let me say a word in general—not particularly with reference to this poem. Your great successes, so far, have been in metres of two, three or four feet: the moment you reach five, you become a bit uncertain. . . . 2dly, your success has been either with what is called great "regularity" (i.e. of simple caesuralation, or where phrasing and metre are almost altogether parallel), or else with a complex rhythm of a dance or song character, not with the metre of complex caesuralation (like Shakespeare & Milton) which is still not dancy. 3d, your success has been most in your symbolist work. Now these three things have a certain relation to each other.

"Inflections of a definite nature always tend to make metaphors literal. So that where the poem is *anything but* literal, there is a tendency (whenever it is well read) to make the inflection or speech-tune approach a monotone. This is especially characteristic of your general style. Now to have run-on lines, i. e. complex caesuralations, is to demand a good deal of variety of inflection in order to assist the ear in co-ordinating the complex rhythm. It follows therefore, that poetry where the literal must not be emphasized and poetry of complex caesuralation (or when the phrasing and metre are not paral-

lel) demand inflections of voice in the reading that are mutually contradictory. Therefore, as a general thing, in such poetry as yours, figure within figures, your method of avoiding breaking up the lines with strong medial pauses is right. However, short lines lend themselves easily to this treatment and are apt to become crabbed if handled with such caesuralation, e.g. as Milton uses in Paradise Lost. On the other hand, lines of 5 feet or more become monotonous (cf. Pope etc.) if continued for any length of time without the modulations introduced by complex caesuralation. Do you see how these three things,—symbolic subject matter, avoidance of caesural breaks in the metre, and short lines hang together as you have so often used them.

"In this connection it is interesting to note that Mallarme's most symbolic poems—the ones the Philistines most abhor—are in short lines, while in his alexandrines he is much less extreme, and also uses his verse more like our complexly caesuralated English masters than any Frenchman. Note, too, that in Browning's later lyrics, his short lines faint under the burden of inflection and caesura.

"I shall be most interested to see what you do with my suggestions about "Beyond the Gamut." Some of my criticisms I am very positive about—regard them as scientific. Others are mere personal impressions. You will use and reject, of course, as suits you. Don't fail to see that at bottom I like the poem, or I should not have gone so thoroughly into it.

"Ever thine,

Dickon."

VI

Thought

Be body, mind and soul
Subject to love's control,
Each loving to the limit of love's power;
And all as one, not three,
So is man's trinity
Enhanced and freed and gladdened hour by hour.

VI

Thought

IN her brilliant book of essays, *Patrins,*—dedicated to Bliss Carman, "biggest of Romanys,"—Louise Imogene Guiney made some trenchant and apposite remarks about the eager folk who insist upon "getting the most out of poetry," who are so hot in pursuit of moral and intellectual improvement that they lose in their dealings with poetry what is after all its chief excuse for being. Their deadly seriousness is a mark of immature minds, of an unripe culture. The person who will deduce moral lessons from the Odes of John Keats is not only unfit but unworthy to read them, and he will find matter more to his mind in the lucubrations of Samuel Smiles and Martin Tupper. What sane person reads *Hamlet* for its thought alone, or *Paradise Lost* for its homily? All the direct teaching of either could be phrased in a single page of very dull prose which no one would ever care to look at. One way of stating this principle is to make it clear that whereas direct teaching, the didactic, is always abstract, art's language always is the concrete. Whenever the poet fails to speak in terms of sense images, persons, events, he becomes, it may be, an excellent essayist or preacher but he ceases for the time to be a poet.

Although it is true that any man who can produce things of beauty will probably be a man also of high intellectual and moral attainments, yet the poet is under no obligation to be either wiser or better than other men. His sufficiently exacting business is to be always a poet.

There is therefore scarcely any more foolish and futile question to be imagined than "What does this poem teach, and how can I get the most good out of it?" If it is a true poem, it should teach you first of all, O futile and foolish questioner, to be still; it should set your lust for mental and moral improvement temporarily at rest. It should remind you that your effort to break every butterfly of beauty upon the wheel of didacticism is as stupid as it is cruel. What does the Fifth Symphony teach? What is the moral purport of a Chopin nocturne? What does a rose really mean? How can one look at the moon "so as to get the most good out of it?"? This attitude is the mark of a civilization better acquainted with sermons than with beauty and is due in part to the meddling of the acquisitive instinct in matters with which it can have no concern. The barbarian may indeed make beauty impossible, he may wreck it and despoil, but he cannot make it his own as he does his houses and lands; and this vaguely perplexes and disturbs him. He cannot understand a thing which no man can annex as personal property. If only, he thinks, he could get for himself the inner meaning of a beautiful thing, tear out the heart of its mystery, then it

would leave him at peace. The idea never occurs to him that the meaning of a beautiful thing is its very body and substance. And so he goes in for lecture courses on poetry with vast earnestness and studies heavily annotated text books on Shakespeare and Robert Browning in the hope of great mental and moral improvement. This hope, of course, is not always disappointed; but in-so-far as he is actuated by the desire to appropriate poetry to himself by this method he presents a spectacle somewhat like that of a baby crying for the moon.

On the other hand, it is clear that the profession of the artist does not prevent a man from having opinions, thoughts, a philosophy even, apart from his work. Nay, it is almost certain that he will have them, because of the necessary depth and range and intensity of his experience. There is no reason, either, why his thought should not be woven into the fabric of his art, but good reason why it should be. All that art demands of the poet in this regard is that his thought should be woven always upon the loom of poetry. We have no objection to his morality so long as he remains a poet. Let him be as philosophic as he likes provided he does not speak as a philosopher. Let him be religious, provided he remembers always and forever the "folly of preaching." He cannot go wrong while he keeps it in mind that "a poet's business with abstractions is only to turn them into concretions." Sir Philip Sidney says very cogently upon this matter: "Whatever the philosopher saith should be done,

the peerless poet giveth a perfect picture of it. He yieldeth to the power of the mind an image of that of which the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description. The poet doth not only show the way, but doth give so sweet a prospect unto the way as will entice any man to enter it. Nay, he doth as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at first give you a cluster of grapes."

The cardinal principle that poetry must first of all be concrete has been so well understood of late that few recent or contemporary poets lay upon the critic any obligation to analyse their thought. Over-emphasis upon this principle has led many of them, indeed, to boast unnecessarily that, in their poetry at least, they do not think at all. Whether in praise or blame, this cannot be said of Bliss Carman. For better or worse, there is in him a strong intellectual tendency, a disposition to think things out to a rational and carefully considered conclusion. Poetry, he says, is bounded on the north by mathematics and on the south by music. The remark holds good, at any rate, for the poetry he has written, and one finds it necessary, therefore, to consider what may be called his northern exposure.

In the poetry of Bliss Carman's first period, as we have seen, the romantic temper strongly predominated, as perhaps it should in the work of all young poets. The earlier poems show an uncharted drift of fancy, a nympholeptic longing, a worship of beauty for its own sole sake which are always found in the poetry of men who are really young.

Tender as April twilight
He sang, and the song grew
Vague as the dreams which roam about
This world of dust and dew.

During the second and third periods, however, there has been a gradual emergence and growth of intellect, an increasing desire for precision, for definition, for a clearly and soundly wrought structure of belief. He has to-day a defined and a consciously held philosophy of life —one quality the more to set him somewhat apart from most of his contemporaries and to ally him with that mode of thought and feeling which, for lack of a better word, we still call classic.

The poet's technic has hardly kept pace, however, with this growth in thought, so that he has not so successfully transmuted his later experience into poetry. His early work is surcharged with natural beauty, thought is dominated by sense, the poet's very soul seems drenched in the stains of sky and sea; but in the later poems the outer world takes a sub-ordinate place as a metaphor of mind. From the Book of Nature he begins to draw here and there a text which he uses as a foot-note in the great Book of Man. He begins to speak in parables. When he mentions April he may mean resurrection, and we miss the clear matin plainsong of "Make me over, Mother April." When he writes the word October we suspect a covert reference to death, however much we should prefer the thrilling

straight-forwardness of "There is something in October that is native to my blood." Too frequently in his later work the poet puts off his singing robes and takes up the gown of priest or professor. The language of pure poetry which he has learned so well and which he trusts when it is a matter of emotion, he seems at times unwilling to trust with his thought.

One recalls in connection with this slight tendency towards the didactic Bliss Carman's descent from Daniel Bliss, the mighty man of God who held sway in Concord in the early years of the eighteenth century—a descent which he shares with America's foremost philosopher and didactic poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson. There are curious resemblances between Emerson and Carman in imagination and thought, even in personal appearance, which are not to be wholly accounted for by any amount of study and imitation. Emerson's poetry, to be sure, is lean and astringent, a series of lightning flashes, and as different in style from that of Bliss Carman as any poetry could well be; but his use of nature as a metaphor of mind in such poems as *Woodnotes* and *Two Rivers* is closely similar to that of the later poet. The philosophic background of this treatment of nature, which is the same in both, is best named, if it must be named at all, by the word Transcendentalism. Bliss Carman may have derived this phase of his thought from his long and close study of Emerson, or he may have drawn it from the thought current in his youth and particularly

didactic - intent to teach a moral lesson or instruct

in the class rooms of Josiah Royce at Harvard, but it is certain that Transcendental ideas pervade all his later writing. He has the Transcendental belief in the essential identity of man's soul with the Soul of the universe, the belief in man's consequent kinship with Nature, and finally the reliance upon intuition as the means whereby man becomes aware in ecstatic moments of his mystical union with the Over-soul. Such a philosophy carries with it certain necessary corollaries for the poetic treatment of nature, which it conceives to be only a manifestation of spirit in the world of sense. A poet who thinks of spirit and matter as almost indistinguishable can avoid the imputation of didacticism only with the greatest difficulty, if at all.

Even without the intervention of Transcendentalism, the poetry written in America during the nineteenth century would still have been didactic for the reason that it would still have been deeply tinged with Puritanism. Many reluctant misgivings must be overcome before our sluggish northern blood can accept things merely lovely for their own sakes without a sense of sin. From Wigglesworth and Anne Bradstreet to Whittier and Longfellow the feat was very seldom accomplished, and the greater part of our so-called poetry was little more than versified homiletics. Even so fine an artist as Hawthorne seldom escaped the Puritan atmosphere of his environment and inheritance which accounts so largely for both his weakness and his strength. The Can-

adian Loyalists, despite their return to the English Church, kept much of the Puritan virus in their veins, and it seems only natural that the first poetry of the North should show something of the didactic bent which had scarcely been outgrown even in New England. According to this view, we have in the poetry of Roberts and Carman not so much a recrudescence as a late survival of didacticism. Thoughts of this nature may have stirred in the poet's mind as he stood on Burial Hill in Concord some years ago and wrote the poem concerning his ancestor, Daniel Bliss:

Perhaps we wear the very guise
And features that he wore,
And with the look of his own eyes
Behold his world once more.
Would that his spirit too might live,
While lives his goodly name,
To move among the sons of men,
"A minister of flame."

So might his magic gift of words,
Not wholly passed away,
Survive to be a sorcery
In all men's hearts to-day,
To plead no less for loveliness
Than truth and goodness still.
God rest you, sir, his minister,
Asleep on Burial Hill!

"To plead no less for loveliness"? Not less, certainly, but far more; and there is the vast advantage

which the poet of to-day has over his Puritan ancestor, that he sees a larger and fairer world. . . a world in which beauty exists as well as truth and goodness, and is their unashamed compeer. In a poetry which so constantly acknowledges the equal claims of beauty, didacticism can do little harm. So elaborate an apology as has been made moreover, is in danger of magnifying what is after all a trifling defect. Bliss Carman is fully aware of the differences between a sonnet and a sermon. Wherever the didactic intent is apparent in him one is likely to feel that it is just sufficient to save his work from the poisonous heresy of "art for art's sake." Certain words which he has written about Longfellow may well be applied to himself: "You perceive that the main business of his endeavors is not the creation of mere illusion, however beautiful, but the revelation of goodness—the great active goodness of the universe. He is too excellent an artist to be merely didactic, but he is too excellent a poet to be merely artistic."

Even in the most patently didactic of his poetry, Bliss Carman is about the poet's true business of creating beauty, and so long as he attends to that we may cheerfully grant him much of his apparent desire that beauty be interpreted as a symbol of the "great active goodness of the universe," or as the "fine frosty tracework of some Breath upon the pane." By such processes of thought and intuition he saves his quest of beauty from the charge of mere aestheticism, gives it a range

and depth which it could not otherwise have. The initial impulse behind his poems is always some sight or sound of concrete reality, and his ultimate conclusions are reached not by the ways of reason but by emotion. After all the intellectual ferment recorded in *Behind the Arras* it is the sight of beauty that draws the poet back to his faith that this sublunary scheme of things is somehow sound at the core. "The essence of religion," he rightly says, "is emotion, not the thought—the sure and certain conviction, not the logical conclusion." And so is it with his poetry.

In a comparison of Bliss Carman's poetry with that of his three chief masters—Arnold, Browning, Emerson—one sees that the stream of emotion has washed his poetry, after all remarkably free from the dross of didacticism. He has much the same things to say that they said, and he has learned his manner and technic in no small degree from them, but his poetry contains less alloy of doctrine than theirs, his singing is more purely song. Such direct teaching as there is in him seems only to give depth and inner significance to what might otherwise have been a merely decorative beauty. "Any piece of art," he writes, "which does not fulfil its obligations to truth and beauty and goodness is necessarily faulty. . . . Because man's nature is of three phases, wherever he finds full expression for himself in Art we may expect not only creations of beauty but monuments of wisdom and religion as well." In harmony with

this view, he holds that the poet is by no means the strange and anomalous being he is sometimes accounted, but simply the most normal man, "with all the best powers and capabilities of manhood in him. He must be capable of thought, capable of manual labor, capable of passion. No one lacking in these three essentials, or lacking in any one of them, can be called a normal man; nor can he have anything valuable or great to say to us about life."

In all his poems, Mr. Carman begins as a poet. In a few he ends as a philosopher. In the greater part of his work the teaching is implicit only. The best of his poems are like pebbles dropped into the still waters of the imagination, wakening ripples there that circle and spread until they lap along the shores of infinity. He has a thrilling way, too, of leading his reader through a poem on a comparatively commonplace theme, and then, in the final stanzas, filling and firing the imagination with sudden gleams and hints of larger significance which come like a burst of sun at the end of a lowering day. One finds a good example of this trait in *The Dustman.*

"Dustman, dustman!"
Through the deserted square he cries,
And babies put their rosy fists
Into their eyes.

There's nothing out of No-man's land
So drowsy since the world began,

As "Dustman, dustman,
Dustman."

He goes his village round at dusk
From door to door, from day to day;
And when the children hear his step
They stop their play.

"Dustman, dustman!"
There, Drowsyhead, the old refrain,
"Dustman, dustman!"
It goes again.

"Dustman, dustman,
Hurry by and let me sleep.
When I most wish for you to come,
You always creep.

"Dustman, dustman,
And when I want to play some more,
You never then are farther off
Than the next door.

"Dustman, dustman!"
He beckles down the echoing curb,
With a step that neither hopes nor hates
Ever disturb.

"Dustman, dustman!"
He never varies from one pace,
And the monotony of time
Is in his face.

And some day, with more potent dust,
Brought from his home beyond the deep,
And gently scattered in our eyes,
We, too, shall sleep,—

Hearing the call we know so well
Fade softly out as it began,
"Dustman, dustman,
Dustman!"

At other times, the parabolic intent is so clear that no suggestion of purpose is required. An admirable instance is seen in *The Juggler,* which is at the same time remarkable, for the verve and beauty of its phrasing.

Look how he throws them up and up,
The beautiful golden balls!
They hang aloft in the purple air,
And there never is one that falls.

He sends them hot from his steady hand,
He teaches them all their curves;
And whether the reach be little or long,
There never is one that swerves.

Some, like that tiny red one there,
He never lets go far;
And some he has sent to the roof of the tent
To swim without a jar.

So white and still they seem to hang,
You wonder if he forgot
To reckon the time of their return
And measure their golden lot.

Can it be that, hurried or tired out,
The hand of the juggler shook?
O never you fear, his eye is clear,
And he knows them all like a book.

And they will come home to his hand at last,
For he pulls them by a cord
Finer than silk and strong as fate,
That is just the bid of his word.

Was there ever such a sight in the world?
Like a wonderful winding skein,—
The way he tangles them up together
And ravels them out again!

He has so many moving now
You can hardly believe your eyes;
And yet they say he can handle twice
The number when he tries.

You take your choice and give me mine;
I know the one for me.
It's that great bluish one low down
Like a ship's light out at sea.

It has not moved for a minute or more.
The marvel that it can keep
As if it had been set there to spin
For a thousand years asleep.

If I could have him at the inn
All by myself some night,—
Inquire his country, and where in the world
He came by that cunning sleight!

Where do you guess he learned the trick
To hold us gaping here,
Till our minds in the spell of his maze almost
Have forgotten the time of year?

Likely enough, when the show is done
And the balls all back in his hand,
He'll tell us why he is smiling so,
And we shall understand.

Anything like a complete study of Bliss Carman's thought would involve a more thorough consideration of his prose books than can be given in this place, for it is in his prose that he has expressed his thought fully and explicitly. The thought of the longer poems is obviously moving in the direction of prose, and one would have had a sense of incompletion if actual prose had not been reached. One finds in the prose books the same materials that glow in the kaleidoscope of his poetry, but uncolored. He makes, as we have seen, a clear distinction between prose and verse, striving in the former only for clarity, precision, denotation. Emerson's prose, for example, is very different. It is more compact of flashing images, more masterly in rhythms, more poetic indeed, than all but half a dozen of his poems. Bliss Carman, who writes a more poetic verse than this one of his masters, has been content to write a more prosaic prose.

Some knowledge of Bliss Carman's thought as expressed in the prose books may be very easily obtained. As much of it as is essential to an understanding of his poetry may be expressed in a few words. His philosophy, for which he has invented the name "unitrinianism," teaches as its main tenet the parity and unity of body, mind, and spirit. Defect or excess in any one of

these leads to a corresponding failure in the life. "To neglect one is to injure all." One sees at a glance that this is not a metaphysic but rather a philosophy of life, and that it is of little value if not given a practical significance and application. Mr. Carman values it chiefly for its bearings upon the actual conduct of life. The following words of his will show how closely and constantly he would apply it to our lives of every day: "Both fundamentally and throughout infinite intricacies of subdivisions, the making of personality has its threefold requirement and procedure, and must depend on definite training in morality, intelligence, and physique. A realization of this triune composition of our being and its consequent threefold need of nurture and symmetrical growth, is the most auspicious beginning of culture. It weeds out all false pride in partial excellence and special accomplishment; it does away with mistaken prejudices as to overdevelopment and underdevelopment in any direction at the cost of general symmetry; and substitutes a standard of normal growth with equilibrium of powers, for one of excessive and exceptional cultivation and specialization. When once accepted as a criterion of personal culture, it affords the most helpful basis for self-examination, and for the selection of whatever kind of reinforcement one may most need at any given moment; it indicates the most serviceable adjustment of conditions, and the most valuable utilization of circumstances. It is a magic formula which

turns everything into grist for the mills of life; it is a remedy for hardship and a cure for despair."

At first thought there would seem to be nothing at all novel in this philosophy. It is, in fact, as old as the central principles which governed the education of the ancient Greeks. The value of an idea, however, is not so much in its novelty as in its truth, and truth is seldom novel. A general principle which, when it is clearly stated, seems surprising and new and strange, is probably not true; but real truth, when once we grasp it, has always the air of familiarity. For an age such as ours, an age of frenzied specialization and of warped and twisted humanity, to say of this doctrine that it has nothing to teach us, would be ridiculous indeed. Obvious, in one sense, it certainly is, but in the sense in which first love and paternity are so—experiences which we may talk about glibly for half our lives, and then, quite suddenly, get really to know.

The unitrinian doctrine had a long history before it reached the pages of Bliss Carman's prose and verse. The truth it contains was the serene possession of the ancient Greek and the balance of powers which it inculcates, beautifully exemplified in the finest personalities of their culture, contributed very largely to the glory that was Greece. In the early centuries of the Christian era, however, this humanistic ideal of symmetry was lost, a large portion of what had been truth to the ancient world and a still larger part of what they had meant

by beauty being consigned to the Devil. The Renaissance, which was essentially a re-discovery of the truth which the ancient Greeks had known and which Christianity had obscured, did much, for a time to restore the balance. The stress and strain of modern business, however has destroyed nearly all that the Renaissance did for us, so that the ordinary man of to-day lives a life almost as abnormal and one-sided as that of the bigoted self-lacerating monk, shutting not only beauty and truth away from him but even the life of the spirit in his concentration upon one highly special and quite unimportant activity—acquisition.

More immediately, the doctrine of the triune man came to Bliss Carman from the great French teacher Delsarte, a useful summary of whose thought is given graphically in his "Chart of Man":

	PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	MENTAL
MENTAL	Judgment	Conscience	Induction
EMOTIONAL	Sentiment	Love	Intuition
PHYSICAL	Sensation	Sympathy	Instinct

Bliss Carman first came into contact with Delsarte's ideas during the summer of 1893, when Richard Hovey and his wife were with him in Nova Scotia. Mrs. Hovey had been a pupil of Delsarte in France and spent many years of her life in teaching his methods in America. In order to make his fundamental meaning clear she once drew a triangle on a bit of paper, and wrote along the three sides the words "Body, Mind, Soul," and then threw the paper on the ground so as to show that the isosceles triangle had no bottom, that there is no gradation of rank or dignity in the three phases of man's nature. Delsarte himself had been chiefly interested in the practical aspects of his idea, as used in his teaching of physical expression. Mrs. Hovey taught it with this same emphasis upon the practical to her husband and his friend. These two talked it over year after year. Richard Hovey, with his unusual penchant and gift for close analytic thought, systematized and extended the idea and greatly increased its ramifications. Gradually it was interwoven with all of Bliss Carman's thought and writing. It came to him early enough to involve his entire work after *Low Tide on Grand Pré* and it is more apparent in his recent writing than in that of earlier date. He has phrased it in terms of beauty, given it wings.

In the matter of Bliss Carman's thought, the influence of his friend, Mrs. Mary Perry King, has been as important as that of his early friend, and hers, Rich-

ard Hovey, upon his poetry. The nature of this influence is best revealed, perhaps, in *The Making of Personality,* which the two have written together. A pupil of Mrs. Richard Hovey and therefore a follower of Delsarte, Mrs. King stands for educational ideals and methods for which there are scarcely any precedents short of the gymnasia of ancient Greece. Upon a solidly grounded aesthetic theory she has based a technic of education which has as its main purpose the liberation of the emotional nature through study and practice of the arts of expression, and the gradual harmonizing of the three elements of man's being. She might well use as her maxim Browning's line, "Nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul," for her effort is to close the breach made by an Orientalized Christianity between body and spirit and to reveal the truth which the Greeks so well knew, that body, mind, and spirit are to be raised to their highest powers not separately, as we have so long striven to raise them, but together. To this end she combines the three rhythmic arts—poetry, music, and dancing—into a new artistic unit which she calls "Personal Harmonizing."

If there is nothing really new in unitrinianism, it nevertheless restates for us an ideal of culture which has been all but lost to the world since Christianity, with its hatred of the body, wrested from Athens the control of education. Physical culture, to Bliss Carman, is actually and really an article of religion, on a par with

faith and good works. There is no milder way of expressing his belief without falsifying it. He feels it highly improbable, moreover, that a person with a sunken chest will have a religious faith worth mentioning, or that a man or woman who has not learned to stand and walk correctly will be particularly efficient in good works. The ugly voice, the ungainly gait, the human form distorted by fashion and affectation and laziness into fantastic shapes—all these he sets down in no metaphorical way among the vices. He would add an eighth deadly sin—the sin of being ugly or ungraceful—and he makes no more sharp distinction than Plato was able to make between beauty and goodness. Our undeniably great interest in sports he does not account unto us for righteousness, for he sees clearly that the vast expense at which they are maintained, the public interest which they arouse, their preoccupation with victories and with records, simply postpone the day when we shall begin to think sanely and to some purpose of the human body. Physical culture can never come into its own, he believes, until it is closely related, on terms of absolute equality, with mental and spiritual culture.

That a poet should hold and teach such doctrine is not, after all, surprising, since the poet is he, of all men, who should keep most constantly in mind his triune nature. Not all poets, to be sure, have kept this in mind. Emerson, for example, would have been a far better poet if he had been more aware than he was of the phys-

ical life, its possible joy and ecstasy. Bliss Carman's strong grip upon the world of sense saves him, as we have seen, even in his most didactic moods, from pure abstraction, just as his talent for constructive thought, on the other hand, saves the most concrete of his poetry —say the *Songs of the Sea Children*—from mere sense-worship. Here again we come upon his major characteristic of poise, balance. In *Beyond the Gamut* he has himself phrased the idea:

> Ah, thought cannot far without the symbol!
> Help me, little brother, hold the trend.
> Dear good flesh, that keeps the spirit steady,
> Lest it faint, grown dizzy at the end!

One may regard the unitrinian doctrine in two ways —as a nascent metaphysic or as a fully developed philosophy of life. Its metaphysical aspect is soon stated. At the head and forefront of the system is a dominant divine energy, not essentially different from Emerson's Over-Soul, which reveals itself to man through the physical senses when these are trained to their highest possible delicacy and through the far more subtle instrument of intuition. The truths and knowledge thus revealed can attain actualization only through the guidance of reason acting under the leadership of spirit. In a way, then, this is a philosophy of earth, although very different from that of George Meredith in that it rests much more upon the Divine. Aside from the direct in-

spirations of the intuition, it rejects all revelation which may not come through the senses out of the four gospels of the changing year, but out of these dim intimations man may and must elaborate a structure of belief tenable by the reason and suited to action in such a world as now is.

In its metaphysical aspects Bliss Carman's philosophy is scarcely distinguishable from Transcendentalism, although he interprets that hazy doctrine even more liberally than most of its earlier exponents. Like the idealists of Boston, Concord, and Brook Farm, he begins with a firm belief in the essential unity of Nature, Man, and the Divine, and with the conviction that ultimate truth is immediately accessible to the human mind, through the processes of intuition. His sense of man's kinship with nature as well as the pervasive religious implications of his nature poetry are seen, therefore, to issue from the very bases of his thought. Bliss Carman's most important departure from the Concord School is seen in his interpretation of the Reason, which is not with him the unerring *Vernunft* of Kant, Hegel, Coleridge and Emerson, but rather the less inspired and more logical faculty which John Locke placed at the head of his corner, the *Verstand*. Such a turn against its Transcendental masters is characteristic of a mind which, for all its interest in vague and misty modes of thought and feeling, still loves precision and clear outlines. Not for nothing does he say that the Kingdom of Poetry is bor-

dered on the north by mathematics. The supreme position held by the Reason in Emerson's thought he gives to Intuition, asserting that this latter is a higher faculty but feeling that it needs the constant check and control of the lower.

Bliss Carman is so little a metaphysician, however, and so much a philosopher in the better sense that one feels it almost a waste of time to discuss the larger outlines of his thought. He believes that a man's philosophy should affect his life in some way, that his thought should cleave down to his daily conduct, and that the supreme test of his thought is found in his actual living. For the day by day guidance of conduct, Transcendentalism gives place to his unitrinian belief, and to this he applies only the pragmatic test. In developing and defending this doctrine he has used no dialectic whatever, but only a very uncommon sense, scarcely to be distinguished from intuition, and all that he claims for it is that it "works," that it really makes the lives of men and women more gracious, more satisfying, more serviceable and joyous. The supreme test of right living, and therefore of the beliefs which govern living, he knows, is simply the test of happiness. "Should we not once for all give over our desolate creed of disconsolate suffering, and affirm bravely that the soul of man does not realize itself through sorrow and renunciation but through happiness and achievement. Indeed, happiness is the test of all suc-

cess, the measure of our growth, the boundary of our accomplishment. To be healthy is to be happy; to love anything is to be happy; to find out the truth is to be happy. These are the three ways in which gladness comes to us; and unless we can attain some measure of such joyousness in body, spirit, and mind, we may be very sure that we are not getting the best out of life. Without his due share of each of these three kinds of gladness no man can be greatly happy; and without something of at least one of them no man can be happy at all. . . . Just as the only test of the virtue of salt is its savor, so the only test for the virtue of the heart is its joy." It should be unnecessary to say that the happiness of which Bliss Carman speaks here and on many another page is to be sharply distinguished from pleasure, that it is, in fact, entirely consistent with pain and labor, that the creative artist knows it in the fervid fury of his toil, the young mother in the keenest throes of child birth, and the martyr in the flame.

One might infer, but wrongly, from Bliss Carman's insistence upon joy as the high goal of all our endeavor that he advocates a hedonistic, self-seeking, and self-centered life, a culture of "beautiful souls" for their own sakes. There is, in fact, a sufficient provision in his thought for the necessity of practical cut-going activity. Transcendentalism, no doubt, in rejecting the more stern and virile aspects of Calvin's theology, in denying the need of spiritual and mental strife, found itself finally with a

set of doctrines which must have been for many singularly relaxing to the moral fibre. "Place yourself," says Emerson, "in the middle of the stream of power and wisdom which animates all whom it floats, and you are without effort impelled to truth and right, and a perfect contentment." Even where he adjures us to "Be, and not Seem," he shows in his next sentence how quietistic the injunction was in his mind: "Let us acquiesce." Such teaching as this is good for our souls, perhaps, in an all-too strenuous age and country. "Action and inaction," he saw, "are alike to the True. One piece of the tree is cut for a weathercock and one for the sleeper of a bridge; the virtue of the wood is apparent in both." But when all is said we know that this serene Oriental wisdom is not for us and that it was possible to Emerson only because in his so sheltered life he learned little of our struggle and never learned at all that there is a race to be run by most men which demands a girding of the loins. Bliss Carman, by mingling Transcendentalism with a far more practical philosophy, has saved the truth which Emerson saw while avoiding the defects of his teaching. This reconciliation of the *vita activa* with the *vita contempliva* he has characterized in two words: "alert repose." He stands with Emerson, to be sure, in his faith in the natural goodness of unthwarted human nature; but he is with Carlyle in his insistence upon the necessity of action guided by reason. He would have us loyal to fact as well as to ideals.

Because of his own loyalty to fact Bliss Carman is no enthusiast. He carries no extra baggage of opinions, but goes always lightly equipped, ready for marching orders. His major ideas are so closely related that he can lift them all, so to speak, by one handle. As in the mind of Emerson such subsidiary doctrines as Compensation, Self-Reliance, and Intuition were grouped about the major conception of the Over-Soul, so in Bliss Carman's thought we find raying out from the central principle of unitrinianism such necessary deductions and corollaries as his belief in Poise, Rhythm, Serenity, Leisure. This sphere of thought is constantly revolving upon itself, so that wherever in a carefully wrought and extended passage of his prose or verse one of his ideas is brought forward, the others are likely to follow. In this way and for this reason, as we have seen, his ideas are impressive not for their multiplicity but for their harmonious inter-relation.

Even in Bliss Carman's social and political ideas one may trace the influence of his central thought. Believing so profoundly as he does that life's meaning is to be found only in the development of balanced, rounded, perfected individuals, his sympathies are naturally with the aristocratic point of view, since this consummate development of the individual is an aristocratic ideal. The danger which a democratic society so seldom avoids of placing power in the hands of the ignorant and unfit, the apparent inability of democracy to produce for its

own behoof a sufficient number of superior men—or even to find or recognize those who are still sporadically produced by what is left of the aristocratic tradition—must of course cause a man of his convictions to look out with some dismay upon the world he sees about him. Feeling that society in the mass is to be raised, if at all, not by its own boot-straps but rather by the very old and costly process of raising great individuals first, he would have us concentrate first of all upon this latter end. When this is once accomplished, he sees that there would be still the task of raising all men to the stature of real humanity, of lifting the average to the level of the normal. The aristocrat or great individual, the representative among millions of human fractions, of whole and normal humanity, is distinguished from others, he would say, chiefly by his serene intensity of life, his "zest unsevered from repose."

Walter Pater, in a famous passage of his *Studies in the Renaissance,* urges us to live intensely in the passing instant of time, to "burn always with a hard pure flame," because in a world of flux where all things pass away the passing instant is all that we shall ever have. This is the weary and *fin de siécle* doctrine of an aesthete, issuing from a merely sensational philosophy. Emerson's "ecstatic moment," on the other hand, takes its value not from time at all but from eternity, of which it is a foretaste. In the supreme moments of intuitive vision we are given Pisgah sights across the

waste of time into the promised land of absolute verity. Bliss Carman, with the aesthetic joy in the present of Walter Pater and the philosophic calm of Emerson, takes an interesting middle position in this matter also, adjuring us to "heed only the lyric moment" and to let nothing "mar the fine perfection of the present" not through any desire to cling to the moments as they fly but because of a belief that time is embosomed in eternity. Few men of our day can be more reconciled with time than he, for he has learned "Eternity's unhaste." Consequently he holds life, as it were, with a relaxed grasp, glad to stay but not unwilling to depart.

> A heart that abides to the end,
> As the hills for sureness and peace,
> And is neither weary to wend
> Not reluctant at last of release.

The hope of immortality means more, perhaps, to a poet than to most other men because he is more haunted and obsessed by the truth in the Heraclitean maxim: "All things pass away." The objects of thought are everlasting, but those of sense and emotion are gone almost before we can say that they are here. By the very nature of his art the poet is striving constantly to arrest the flight of the "ecstatic moment," to make it an eternal moment at least in some pale verbal record. Standing upon the fleeting instant, he strives to reach beyond the years.

On nearly every page of Bliss Carman's writing one finds evidence of this obsession. His poetry is full of symbols, types, metaphors of frailty and decay, one of the most perfect of which is the great moth of *Pulvis et Umbra*:

> One frail waif of beauty fronting
> Immortality and doom.

A whole series of poems in the *Ballads of Lost Haven* are only ostensibly songs of the sea and are really concerned with the even more ancient theme of evanescence and death. The tranquillity with which the poet looks forward to the last adventure is sufficiently shown in *Outbound,* the shortest but by no means the best of these poems:

> A lonely sail in the vast sea-room,
> I have put out for the port of gloom.
>
> The voyage is far on the trackless tide,
> The watch is long, and the seas are wide.
>
> The headlands blue in the sinking day
> Kiss me a hand on the outward way.
>
> The fading gulls, as they dip and veer,
> Lift me a voice that is good to hear.
>
> The great winds come, and the heaving sea,
> The restless mother, is calling me.
>
> The cry of her heart is lone and wild,
> Searching the night for her wandered child.

Beautiful, weariless mother of mine,
In the drift of doom, I am here, I am thine.

Beyond the fathom of hope or fear,
From bourn to bourn of the dusk I steer,

Swept on in the wake of the stars, in the stream
Of a roving tide, from dream to dream.

The thought of death is faced most directly in *Behind the Arras*—a book written in the mood of doubt, at times of fear, which comes to a mind powerful and swift when it turns inward upon itself in solitude. Exploring the hinterland of consciousness and interrogating the inner silences, it comes upon strange creatures dwelling upon the shadowy borders of thought, unsuspected until this inward voyage surprised them there. These are the faint memories, almost obliterated, of "births far back, and lives in many stars," haunting the mind as ghosts of forgotten years.

There at the window many a time of year,
Strange faces peer,
Solemn, though not unkind;
Their wits in search of something left behind
Time out of mind.

As if they once had lived here, and stole back
To the window crack
For a peep which seems to say,
"Good fortune, brother, in your house of clay!"
And then, "Good day!"

With muffled faces and in words almost unintelligible, they ask dark questions of the soul and answer not at all. Strange and phantasmal they are, but strong enough to sap all color for the time from what we call the real world. In the poet's intense brooding they grow and gain in vividness at the expense of the world of actuality; he knows that they are only his dream, but yet, since they become for him at least as real as the things of sense, he is forced to ask what reason there can be for according to the latter any different or higher degree of "reality." All experience whatever, and all knowledge, may be only his dream—even that knowledge and experience which seems to show that there are other minds, or other dreams, besides his own. He has had a dream called "life," and he sees it engulfed, as a rain-drop in the sea, by the vastly greater dream of death. He has had a dream of life which includes in absolute parity all beasts and birds and creeping things and men and angels and God, together with these very rare memories which have disturbed his "common sense" attitude toward the world. Which is shadow and which the substance? He finds himself in a solipsistic universe, immured within prison walls of his own building. The mood is powerfully conveyed under the metaphor of a tapestry, woven by his own thought—a tapestry in which all the figures are treated as equally important and equally unreal:

Degraded shapes and splendid seraph forms,
And teeming swarms
Of creatures gauzy dim
That cloud the dusk, and painted fish that swim
At the weaver's whim;

And wonderful birds that wheel and hang in the air;
And beings with hair,
And moving eyes in the face
And white bone teeth and hideous grins, who race
From place to place;

They build great temples to their John-a-Nod,
And fume and plod
To deck themselves with gold,
And paint themselves like chattels to be sold,
Then turn to mould.

Sometimes they seem as real almost as I;
I hear them sigh;
I see them bow with grief,
Or dance for joy like any aspen leaf—
But that is brief.

This uneasy mood of solipsism has been known to many a poet, for in its very nature it is related closely to the sense of solitude and concentration upon the inner life in which the poet's work is done, but it has never been more vigorously phrased than in *Behind the Arras*. For the most part, Bliss Carman's thought is healthily objective, but here it is inward bound. In this book there is a tinge of pessimism, a suggestion of weariness, not to be found elsewhere in his work, which

produce in *The Red Wolf* one of the least pleasant and least forgettable things that have come from his pen—a poem which gives us a glimpse of the savageries lying asleep in man's brain and blood, of the dark red gulfs of animalism over which we sustain our lives:

With the still of the frost comes the wolf, wolf, wolf,
The gaunt red wolf at my door.
He's tall as a Great Dane, with his grizzle russet mane;
And he haunts the silent woods at my door.

The scarlet maple leaves and the sweet ripe nuts
May strew the forest glade at my door,
But my cringing cunning dwarf, with his slavered kacking
laugh,
Cries "Wolf, wolf, wolf!" at my door

. . . .

The wind may parch his hide, or freeze him to the bone,
While the wolf walks far from my door;
Still year on year he sits, with his five unholy wits,
And watches for the wolf at the door.

But the fall of the leaf and the starting of the bud
Are the seasons he loves by the door;
Then his blood begins to rouse, this Caliban I house,
And it's "Wolf, wolf, wolf!" at the door.

. . . .

I curse him, and he leers; I kick him and he whines;
But he never leaves the stone at my door.
Peep of day or set of sun, his croaking's never done
Of the Red Wolf of Despair at my door.

But when the night is old and the stars begin to fade,
And silence walks the path by my door,
Then is his dearest hour, his most unbridled power,
And low comes his "Wolf!" at the door.

I turn me in my sleep between the night and day,
While dreams throng the yard at my door,
In my strong soul aware of a gruesome terror there
Soon to knock with command at my door.

Is it the hollow voice of the census-taker Time
In his old idle round from door to door?
Or only the north wind, when all the leaves are thinned,
Come at last with his moan to my door?

I cannot guess nor tell; only it comes and comes,
As from a vaster world beyond my door,
From centuries of eld, the death of freedom knelled,
A host of mortal fears at my door.

Then I wake; and joy and youth and fame and love and bliss,
And all the good that ever passed my door,
Grow dim, and faint and fade, with the whole world unmade,
To perish as the summer at my door.

The crouching heart within me quails like a shuddering thing,
As I turn on my pillow to the door;
Then in the chill white dawn, when life is half withdrawn,
Comes the dream-curdling "Wolf!" at my door . . .

Only my yellow dwarf; (my servitor and lord!)
I hear him lift the latch at my door;

I see his wobbling chin and his unrepentant grin
As he lets his oafship in at the door.

He is low and humped and foul, and shambles like an ape;
And stealthily he barricades the door,
Then lays his goblin head against my lonely bed,
With a "Wolf, wolf, wolf!" at the door.

I loathe him, but I feed him; I'll tell you how it was
(Hear him now with his "Wolf!" at the door!)
That I ever took him in. He is—he is my kin,
And kin to the wolf at the door!

I loathe him, yet he lives; as God lets Satan live,
I suffer him to slumber at my door,
Till that long-looked-for time, that splendid sudden prime,
When Spring shall go in scarlet by my door.

That day I will arise, put my heel upon his throat,
And squirt his yellow blood upon the door;
Then watch him dying there, like a spider in his lair,
With a "Wolf, wolf, wolf!" at my door.

The great white morning sun shall walk the earth again,
And the children return to my door,
I shall hear their merry laugh, and forget my buried dwarf,
As a tale that is told at the door.

Far from the quiet woods the gaunt red wolf shall flee,
As a cur that is stoned from the door,
And God's great peace come back along the lonely track,
To fill the golden year at my door.

Behind the Arras modulates through various minor keys into a final triumphant major. The poet passes out

of solipsism into a more congenial idealism, or, in the terms of his metaphor, he comes to see that the tapestry is not of his weaving but of God's. Thus he escapes from the prison of self into the breathing sun-lit world again, with a new and more grateful sense of its beauty.

Cease, Wind, to blow
And drive the peopled snow,
And move the haunted arras to and fro
And moan of things I fear to know,
Yet would rend from thee, Wind, before I go
On the blind pilgrimage.
Cease, Wind, to blow.

. . . .

Thou janitor
Of the dim curtained door,
Stir thy old bones along the dusty floor
Of this unlighted corridor.
Open! I have been this dark way before;
Thy hollow face shall peer
In mine no more.

. . . .

Sky, the dear sky!
Ah, ghostly house, good-bye!
I leave thee as the gauzy dragon-fly
Leaves the green pool to try
His vast ambition on the vaster sky,—
Such valor against death
Is deity.

. . . .

O Beauty, how
I do repent me now

Of all the doubt I ever could allow
To shake me like the aspen bough;
Nor once imagine that unsullied brow
Could wear the evil mask
And still be thou!

Bone of thy bone,
Breath of thy breath alone,
I dare resume the silence of a stone,
Or explore still the vast unknown,
Like a bright sea-bird through the morning blown,
With all his heart one joy,
From zone to zone.

Never again, in any later book, does Bliss Carman's thought threaten to undermine his sense of reality. He retains from the experience recorded in *Behind the Arras* a poignant sense of the pathos of life, caught as it is in the meshes of destiny, but there is nowhere else any suggestion of weariness or of fear. From that experience he may have derived also his feeling that over-subtle intellectual analysis is dangerous to that grateful acceptance of life which is his normal attitude. In his later work he rests more heavily upon intuition. He depends, of course, not upon argument at all but solely upon intuition in all that he says and implies concerning what lies on the other side of death. His words on this subject, nearly always connected in one way or another with his "Aprilian creed," have grown more and more confident through the years until, in *Resurgam* and *On Ponus Ridge* he faces fully the greatest question of all

and gives final utterances to his faith. The second of these poems, unfortunately too long to quote, brings together in a very impressive form the results of his long musings on the religious problem. All of his passionate quest for the deeper meanings of Nature is evident there, together with his unswerving demand for something more than Nature alone can give. The poem is almost entirely pagan in feeling and view-point, and yet it has ardor and aspiration of the sort which we are wont to associate with the most Christian of recent poets —Robert Browning. *On Ponus Ridge* sums up a long thought history, and it is curiously like the prose poem called *The Divine Soil* in which John Burroughs gave the results of his half-century of patient musing. In his moments of intensest living Bliss Carman finds it impossible to doubt that life must endure.

> There is a part of me that knows,
> Beneath incertitude and fear,
> I shall not perish when I pass
> Beyond immortality's frontier;
>
> But, greatly having joyed and grieved,
> Greatly content, shall hear the sigh
> Of the strange wind across the lone
> Bright lands of taciturnity.

VII
Style

One hermit thrush entrancing
The solitude with sound,—
Give me the golden gladness
Of music so profound.

So leisurely and orbic,
Serene and undismayed,
He runs the measure over,
Perfection still delayed.

No hurry nor annoyance;
Enough for him to try
The large few notes of prelude
Which put completion by.

VII

Style

A POET'S style is made of the self-same stuff and substance as his thought, so that it is no more possible to separate his manner from his matter than to tear the color from a rose. The images which his mind habitually ranges over, the ideas and moods upon which he dwells longest and most lovingly, determine in large part the qualities by which we know and remember him. And yet, even after we have taken account of a poet's life history, his education, his sense equipment, his mental habits and opinions and philosophy, we are still left with a feeling that something essential has eluded analysis, something unsearchable and mysterious underlying all that lay patent to our examination and more important than all—his personality, namely, and its expression in idiom.

The critic who finds, upon coming to the end of a long and labored exposition, that his real work is scarcely begun and who realizes, indeed, that it can never be fully and completely done, is in no different position from that of any man who strives to convey by spoken or written words a sense of another's personality. One may describe the look and the words and the ways of his friend with searching acumen and with

exhaustive fulness and accuracy of detail and yet give to those who do not know the man no inkling of why one loves him, so that one is reduced at last to the thrilling despair of Montaigne's sentence in which he tried to explain his friendship for Étienne de la Boétie: "Because he was he; because I was I."

One knows the voice of his friend, not only by what it says but by its peculiar pitch and timbre, from any other voice in the world. One knows that voice, but can it be described? The words and thoughts of Bliss Carman are what we have seen, but what of the voice that speaks them, lending to them a great part of whatever power they have to sway our feelings? Many other men have had his thoughts, and have done with them things very different from what he has done. Other men have had his power over words, and yet been quite unlike him. Of every true poet it must be said that the sum of his knowledge and wisdom and art is less important than something ultimately indefinable, but of few poets can this be said with more assurance than of Bliss Carman. His power is to be sought less in what he says than in his style or idiom, in a "touch of manner, hint of mood" which is utterly unlike that of any other poet who ever wrote. His thought, though it may seem to his own generation somewhat unusual, is in accord with the best thought of three thousand years, and it contains no really novel elements; but his idiom or style is his own, unprecedented and inimitable.

Interpreting the word in its larger and more familiar sense, one may say something fairly definite about the style of Bliss Carman. The obscurity of his earlier manner was amusingly characterized by his cousin Charles G. D. Roberts, who once said: "Carman has three styles. One of them, anybody can understand; the second, only Carman and God can understand; but the third—nobody can understand that!" In view of his steady gain in clarity, beginning with the tangled boscage of *Death in April* and coming down to the Wordsworthian simplicity of *Vestigia,* one might say that he has shown these three styles in the reverse order. The obscurity is altogether in the early or "Gothic" period of his work, and the simplicity of his later poems is apparently due in some degree to his return to Greek models in *Sappho* and *The Book of Myths.*

A manner of writing which is left out of account in this statement is that of the *Songs From Vagabondia.* One feels that it would be unfortunate if this rambling and rollicking manner, really an interruption rather than a development, should be the only one of his which is at all familiar to readers of poetry. The vagabond mood had its fitting time and place in his life. It indicated abundant vitality, the free play of fancy out of a happy and carolling heart. One might say of the Vagabondia books, as of the *Songs of the Sea Children,* that if they had not been written one would have been far less certain than he now may be of the poet's full-

orbed development. But this mood did not endure; it was only a stage in the journey of the "marching morrows," and it has "left not a wrack behind." He has himself said the whole truth about such outworn shells of the past in six lines:

> "Pish," said the Snake,
> As he viewed his old skin
> In the fork of a tree,
> "That's only a flake
> Of what I have been;
> That is not me!"

Although the mood of vagabondage was long ago outgrown, the theme has pervaded Bliss Carman's work from his earliest writing down to the present. He speaks habitually not only of himself and of the human spirit but of all things in nature as continually questing after some dimly imagined goal. The spirit of quest and roving in his own mind seems to him, in fact, little more than the human aspect of an onward, upward strife in all nature, and the work of the artist simply man's supreme effort completing the work of earth. With De Vries and Bergson and G. B. Shaw, he believes that the controlling factor in the evolutionary process has been this tireless upward reach and yearning, and not a mere blind chance.

The metaphors of roving and vagabondage are as significant with relation to Bliss Carman's art and technic as they are with relation to his thought. One sees

in the length, in the leisurely and circuitous movement of many of his poems, that he finds it "more blessed to have travelled than to have arrived." Poetry, like life, is to him an experience and not a race. Seldom has he a clear notion of a definite goal to be attained. The vagabond need make no inn at nightfall; he sleeps by the wayside. His poems are seldom climactic in arrangement, and the ends are not always conclusions. Very aptly has he said of himself:

> I am thy hermit thrush,
> Ending no song.

The charm and beauty of his poetry is seldom concentrated. One finds in it few "jewels five words long that on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle forever." The values of his poetry are dispersed, so that excerpts do not give his quality, and if one wishes to quote from him he usually ends by quoting whole poems. There are of course a few lapidarian lines, such as that in *Andrew Straton* describing the pools of a mountain thaw, "Icy-blue hand-breadths of April," and these magically lovely lines:

> "The whippoorwill night long
> Threshing the summer dark
> With his dim flail of song.

But such things are rare in the work of any poet.

The rambling of many of Bliss Carman's poems is partly due, no doubt, to his habitual use of a very facile

measure—the octosyllabic line arranged in alternately rhymed quatrains. The stringent discipline of the sonnet, one feels, would have been beneficial. The eight-syllable line has a specious look of compactness, but its use really leads to "padding," and is hostile to the virtues of severe simplicity and brevity. The best work of Bliss Carman has been done in the longer line. On the other hand, although he needs more space in the single line, his best poems are short. Perhaps this is no more than to say that he is essentially a lyric poet. He does not build thought so well as one who knows the logical habit of his mind would expect. Such a perfectly symmetrical thought structure as that of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* would be quite impossible to him. But when the form is given by emotion rather than by thought, he works with the sure unconscious art of the summer winds in carving a cloud.

Although there are many examples of admirable compression, none of the poems is meagre. Too many, on the other hand, miss the distinction between amplitude and diffuseness. The length of such poems as *A Young Pan's Prayer* is justified, perhaps, by the necessity of a long time-exposure to the mood or idea, but it must be admitted that the poet too often sings on and on past the coda, as though intoxicated by the rhythms of his own making. This very lack of close logical structure often contributes, however, to the sense of easy mastery always given by his more characteristic

poems. One sees that he makes no effort to pack his lines as full of thought and beauty as they will hold. Very often his verse approaches the spontaneity of speech, though of a speech the most musical and distinguished imaginable. There are many lines which it would seem that only a little care in addition to what was given might have improved in thought or cadence, but one seldom wishes that it had been expended. A more meticulous workmanship would have marred the effect of spontaneity which is so large a part of the poet's idiom.

We may move a step nearer to real comprehension of Bliss Carman's idiom by attempting to isolate, name, and illustrate its major characteristics. Not all the qualities of his style can be illustrated in brief space because some of them are dependent as we have seen, upon continuity, sustained flight; but no enumeration, although incomplete, can fail to suggest the extraordinary range of his gamut. Not all the qualities mentioned will seem at first to fall under the general caption of "style," but it may be said at least that a study of them carries one about as far as analysis can go toward an understanding of that mystery.

I. *Joy*: most frequently aroused by sympathy with the apparent joy of nature:—

> Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
> I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,

A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

2. *Serenity*:—

My forest cabin half-way up the glen
Is solitary, save for one wise thrush,
The sound of falling water, and the wind
Mysteriously conversing with the leaves.

Here I abide unvisited by doubt,
Dreaming of far-off turmoil and despair,
The race of men and love and fleeting time,
What life may be, or beauty, caught and held
For a brief moment at eternal poise.

. . . .

Surely some God contrived so fair a thing
In the vast leisure of uncounted days,
And touched it with the breath of living joy,
Wondrous and fair and wise! It must be so.

3. *Occasional intensity*:—

Shall the little fame concern me,
Or the triumph of the years,
When I keep the mighty silence
Through the falling of her tears?

I shall heed not, though 'twere April
And my field-larks all returned,
When her lips upon these eyelids
One last poppied kiss have burned.

. . . .

Only let one frail dark woman
Mourn for me when I am dead,
I shall be content with beauty
And the dust above my head

Be my requiem the rain-wind,
And my immortality
But the life-time of one heart-ache
By the unremembering sea!

4. *Mystery*:—

Far off shore the sweet low calling
Of the bell-buoy on the bar,
Warning night of dawn and ruin
Lonelily on Arrochar.

5. *Compression*:—

The lover of child Marjory
Had one white hour of life brim full;
Now the old nurse, the rocking sea,
Hath him to lull.

The daughter of child Marjory
Hath in her veins to beat and run,
The glad indomitable sea,
The strong white sun.

6. *Occasional violence*:—

He works with a rollicking stave at lip,
And loud is the chorus skirled;
With the burly rote of his rumbling throat
He batters it down the world.

7. *Extreme delicacy*:—

Or did goblin men contrive thee
In the forges of the hills
Out of thistle-drift and sundown
Lost amid their tawny rills,

Every atom on their anvil
Beaten fine and bolted home,
Every quiver wrought to cadence
From the rapture of a gnome?

8. *Humor*:—

Said the hearse-horse to the coffin,
"What the devil have you there?
I may trot from court to square,
Yet it neither swears nor groans
When I jolt it over stones."
Said the coffin to the hearse-horse,
"Bones!"

Said the hearse-horse to the coffin,
"What the devil have you there,
With that purple frozen stare?
Where the devil has it been
To get that shadow grin?"
Said the coffin to the hearse-horse,
"Skin!"

Said the hearse-horse to the coffin,
"What the devil have you there?
It has fingers, it has hair;
Yet it neither kicks nor squirms
At the undertaker's terms."
Said the coffin to the hearse-horse,
"Worms!"

9. *Sententiousness*:—

Have little care that life is brief,
And less that art is long;
Success is in the silences,
Though fame is in the song.

10. *Suggestion through imitative sound*:—

Only the wind is over her grave
For mourner and comforter.

11. *Quiet*:—

The noise is hushed within the street;
The summer twilight gathers down;
The elms are still; the moonlight spires
Track their long shadows through the town.

With looming willows and gray dusk
The open hillward road is pale,
And the great stars are white and few
Above the lonely Ardise trail.

And with no haste nor any fear,
We are as children going home
Along the marshes where the wind
Sleeps in the cradle of the foam.

12. *Romantic atmosphere*:—

From *The Moon-Dial.*

Iron and granite and rust,
In a crumbling garden old,
Where the roses are paler than dust
And the lilies are green with gold,

Under the racing moon,
Unconscious of war or crime,
In a strange and ghostly noon,
It marks the oblivion of time.

The shadow steals through its arc,
Still as a frosted breath,
Fitful, gleaming, and dark
As the cold frustration of death.

13. *Vivid color*:—

Lo, now far on the hills
The crimson fumes uncurled,
Where the caldron mantles and spills
Another dawn on the world!

14. *Audacity*:—

For a woman yesterday
Loved me, body, soul, and all!
Saints will lift their crowns to me
At the Judgment Call.

15. *Multum in parvo*:—

I came to a roadside dwelling
With great eaves low and wide,
Asking my way to the village,
And they bade me step inside.

Welcome and cheer they gave me,—
Were comrades loving and strong;
And they bade me wait for supper,
But I could not stay so long.

Nothing I brought to the house
But the garb of ruddy and tan,
Suited for pleasure or wear,
Befitting a roving man.

Nothing I brought to the inn
But the traveller's cloak I wore;
And that, when I came away,
I needs must drop by the door.

16. *Tenderness*:—

What do men give thanks for?
I give thanks for one
Lovelier than morning,
Dearer than the sun.

. . . .

Soft as rain in April,
Quiet as the days
Of the purple asters
And the autumn haze;

Wise with all the silence
Of the waiting hills,
When the gracious twilight
Wakes in them and thrills;

With a voice more tender
Than the early moon
Hears among the thrushes
In the woods of June;

Delicate as grasses
When they lift and stir—
One sweet lyric woman
I give thanks for her.

Bliss Carman's style is not the lean, astringent style of Emily Dickinson, which seems the spiritual essence of New England, with its thin gray soil and its fragile beauty clinging precariously to crevices of rock. Rather, it is a style full-bodied, muscular, masculine, coming just short of Tennysonian amplitude. Its defect is a certain tropical luxuriance through which the edge of thought is not always keen enough to cut—but then, to balance this, what masterpieces of rejection and self-denial in the purer lyrics, what ascetic subtleties of suggestion! Often he throws only a few threads of implication upon the beam, leaving the reader to weave across them whatever weft of beauty he may. He knows that a poet, unlike the writer of prose, has done less than half his work when he has nailed down one single and unmistakable meaning—his own; and he knows, too, that in art the half is often better than the whole.

In this matter of style the comparison with Emerson is again helpful. Like that of his remote kinsman, the style of Bliss Carman has two phases. It can be either lowly or exalted, familiar or restrained. At one extreme it is sometimes almost as colloquial—except for the absence of dialect—as that of James Whitcomb Riley; at the other it shows affinities with the grand manner of Matthew Arnold. By joining these two extremes he has fashioned an idiom as easily recognizable and strongly-marked as that of Swinburne or that of Poe, although it is less easily parodied than either. In the best of his work perfect dignity and utter simplicity are fused together into a style of high distinction. No better illustration of this fusion, and no more beautiful poem, can be found in all his work than *At the Great Release,* only a part of which can be quoted:

When the black horses from the house of Dis
Stop at my door and the dread charioteer
Knocks at my portal, summoning me to go
On the far solitary unknown way
Where all the race of men fare and are lost,
Fleeting and numerous as the autumnal leaves
Before the wind in Lesbos of the Isles;

Though a chill draught of fear may quell my soul
And dim my spirit like a flickering lamp
In the great gusty hall of some old king,
Only one mordant unassuaged regret,
One passionate eternal human grief,

Would wring my heart with bitterness and tears
And set the mask of sorrow on my face.

. . . .

Not the green woods that I so dearly love,
Nor summer hills in their serenity,
Nor the great sea mystic and musical,
Nor drone of insects, nor the call of birds,
Nor soft spring flowers, nor the wintry stars;
To all the lovely earth that was my home
Smiling and valiant I could say farewell.

But not, O not to one strong little hand,
To one droll mouth brimming with witty words,
Nor ever to the unevasive eyes
Where dwell the light and sweetness of the world
With all the sapphire sparkle of the sea!
Ah, destiny, against whose knees we kneel
With prayer at evening, spare me this one woe.

As a last resort in this hopeless effort to define the exact nature of a poetic idiom, we may turn to metaphor. Every poet, because of his habitual moving among a necessarily restricted number of images and ideas, seems to carry about with him a certain peculiar aura a climate, a thought country, one might almost say a geography of his own. He creates for himself a country of the imagination which is often very different, as in the cases of Poe and Spenser, from the country in which his body is doomed to dwell. John Keats is associated in one's mind not with the hospitals of London which he walked in the flesh but with some rich and ancient land,

humid, low, heavily cultivated, a lush garden land, a favorite of the sun. The thought country of Percy Shelley, on the other hand, is high and rocky, wind-swept, neighboring the sky, with a thin dry air and sparse herbage. Bliss Carman has also discovered or dreamed for us a country of the imagination which only he can bring before the eyes of the mind. He has taken hints, no doubt, from the many places of the actual world in which he has pitched his gypsy tent, and no little importance in this regard must be given to the fortunate accident of his Northern birth. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are not far from New England in terms of miles, but they have the strangeness of foreign land to most of his readers. For all their actual beauty of wedded sea and land, for all the charm of their history fading away into legend and myth, their interest to many of those who know them is and will be of the poet's making. He has made them strange, remote, half-fabulous; he has filled them with wandering voices calling by the sea and crying in the mist; he has filled them with a light that never was on any other sea or land. But there has been a reciprocal action. This country of weary winters and suddenly bursting springs that seem like resurrection, this land neighboring the wilderness with its vast roaring tides and hovering mist, has contributed something, one cannot say how much, of the unique qualities which all sensitive readers feel but which no one can fully explain, in the poetry of Bliss

Carman. Acadie has been his "fustian country," his Land of Cockaigne, giving distance and perspective to his imagination. Ascribe to his natural endowment and to the slight Celtic strain in his blood as much as one will of the weird effects which he evokes from sky and field and sea, there will still remain something which can be set down only to the environment of his childhood, to the house of many shadows in which he lived, to the long winter nights by the fireside, to the whispering forest, to the voice and breath of the sea always about him.

Yet one may go to Acadie, to Siasconset, to the Catskills, and look in vain for any recognizable trait of the Carman country. Poets are known by their seeing what we cannot see, and we must take their word for all that lies beyond our ken.

> It is a country of the sun,
> Full of forgotten yesterdays,
> Where Time takes Summer in his care
> And fills the distance of her gaze.
>
> It stretches from the open sea
> To the blue mountains and beyond;
> The world is Vagabondia
> To him who is a vagabond.

Prose must lag far behind, but at least it can say that the Carman country is a leisurely land where the dials have been stolen from all the clocks and the seasons

drift quietly over, leaving no stain or trace in the sky. It is a land of mystery and magic, of forms and fancies which are half reality and half the products of a powerful but strongly controlled creative faculty. There are old familiar faces there, strangely enobled against a novel background, and well-remembered voices singing a new song. Leaves make a low rustling there along a shadowed shore, and sails are moving mysteriously over dim water and sea-calls thrilling through the dusk from ship to ghostly ship. The song may bring us to some ancient village sleeping by the sea where moon-lit water glitters over wave-wet rocks, or to a thrush-enchanted solitude among the summer hills, but always one knows that he is in the Carman country. It is such a land as no other poet has ever led us through, and one which our lives would have been the poorer not to have known.

A Check List of First Editions of the Works of Bliss Carman

Compiled by Frederic F. Sherman, with Revisions and Additions by R. H. Hathaway.

1. October. (An Anthology.) Containing poem, An October Hush, never reprinted. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, (1886).
2. November. (An Anthology.) Containing poem, In November, never reprinted. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, (1886).

2*a*. Broadsheet. A Woman's Exile, Through the Twilight, Low Tide on Grand-Pré, etc. Extra long, narrow folio. Four columns. (Fredericton, N.B., 1887.)

3. The Canadian Birthday Book. Containing three quatrains never reprinted. Diminutive 4to. Toronto, 1887.

3*a*. Death in April. (wrappers) 4to. (Fredericton, N.B.) (1888?)

4. Broadsheet. Gwendolen (and) Marjorie. Fredericton, N.B. October, 1889.
5. Leaflet (folded). Marian Drurie. 4to. (Windsor, N.S., December, 1889.)

6. Songs of the Great Dominion. Containing, among others, The Wraith of the Red Swan, a long poem, never reprinted. Crown 8vo. London, 1889.
7. Broadsheet. The Kelpie Riders. Folio. 4 columns. (Windsor, N.S.) December, 1889.
8. Low Tide on Grand Pré. (Canadian Series of Booklets). Foolscap 4to. Wrappers. Toronto. n.d. (1889).
9. Leaflet. (folded). A Windflower (New York) Christmas, 1890.
10. Broadsheets (two). Pulvis et Umbra, Wayfaring, The End of The Trail. Oblong folio. Double columns. (1890).
11. Broadsheet (single column, pale blue paper). The Trail of the Bugles. Oblong 8vo. New York City, July, 1891.
12. Broadsheet (single column, pale blue paper). The Last Watch. Oblong 8vo. New York, Jan. 15th, 1891.
13. Broadsheet. A Sailor's Wedding. New York. March 12th, 1891.
14. Leaflet (folded). A Pagan's Prayer. 8vo. (New York), Christmas, 1891.
15. Broadsheet. The Yule Guest. New York, 1891.
16. Younger American Poets. Containing, among others, Death in April, a long poem, never reprinted. Crown 8vo. New York, 1891.

17. Broadsheet. The Grave Tree, Seven Wind Songs, etc. Folio. New York, September, 1892.

18. Broadsheet. The Master of the Isles, An Afterword, A Robin Song, The Tragedy of Willow The Faithless Lover, and The Faithful Love, Folio. New York, September, 1892.

19. Single leaf. In the Heart of the Hills. Oblong 8vo. New York, April 15th, 1892.

20. Single leaf. Marjory Darrow. New York, September, 1892. (From The Independent, N. Y., September 1st, 1892.)

21. Single leaf. An April Alibi. New York, n.d. (1892?).

22. Broadsheet. Olaf Hjörward. Folio. New York, March, 1892. (From The Independent of March 31st, 1892.)

23. Broadsheet. The White Gull. For the Centenary of the Birth of Shelley, Aug. 4th, 1892. (From The Independent, N.Y., August 4th, 1892.)

24. Ave: An Ode for the Centenary of the Birth of P. B. Shelley. By Charles G. D. Roberts. Containing stanza from The White Gull (here first printed in a book) as preliminary. Boards. Crown 4to. Toronto, 1892.

24*a*. The Elf Errant. Vol. 1, No. 1. Containing story. A White Cauldron. Wrappers 4to. Boston, 1892.

25. Morning. (Song.) With music by Lottie Vanderveer-Willing. Folio. New York, 1893.

26. Low Tide on Grand Pré: A Book of Lyrics. Foolscap 8vo. New York, 1893.

27. Low Tide on Grand Pré. Second edition, with new poems. Foolscap 8vo. Cambridge and Chicago, 1894. (Also 50 copies on large paper. Boards. Small 4to.)

28. Saint Kavin: A Ballad (50 copies.) Wrappers. 32mo. Cambridge, 1894.

29. Songs from Vagabondia. (With Richard Hovey) Boards. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1894. (Also 60 copies on large paper.)

30. Silas Marner. By George Eliot. Riverside Literature Series. With Introduction by Mr. Carman. Wrappers. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1895.

30*a*. A Victorian Anthology. Containing, among other poems, Song ("Love, by that loosened hair"), here first published in book form. 8vo. Boston and New York, 1895.

31. At Michaelmas, (100 copies.) Wrappers. Foolscap 8vo. Wolfville, N.S., 1895.

32. Behind the Arras. Boards. Foolscap 8vo. Illus. Boston and New York, 1895. (Three or four sets of sheets of the first edition were printed in brown ink, possibly with the English imprint of the Macmillan Co.)

33. A Seamark: A Threnody for Robert Louis Stevenson. Wrappers. Diminutive 4to. Boston, 1895. (Also 50 copies on handmade paper.)

34. Ninety-Six: A Calendar for 1896. Verses by Charles G. D. Roberts and Bliss Carman. Wrappers. Crown 4to. Toronto Art Students' League (1896).

35. More Songs from Vagabondia. (With Richard Hovey.) Boards. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1896. (Also 60 copies on large paper.)

35*a*. A Treasury of Helpful Verse. Containing The Marching Morrows and The Trail of the Bugles, the latter never reprinted. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1896.

36. Winter Number of the *Courier Innocent.* Edited by Richard Hovey, T. B. Meteyard, Bliss Carman and others. 4to. Butcher's paper, stitched. Scituate, Mass. Salt Marsh Press, 1897.

37. Ballads of Lost Haven. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, New York and London, 1897.

38. The Girl in the Poster. (100 copies.) Wrappers. Diminutive 4to. Wayside Press (Springfield, Mass.), 1897.

39. Leaflet (folded). Exhibition of Paintings by Leon Dabo, Dec. 31st, 1906 to Jan. 12th, 1907, at Walter Rowland's Galleries, 431 Boylston Street, Boston. 8vo. Four pages. (On pages 2 and 3 an

appreciation of the painter by Mr. Carman, entitled "A Poet in Color.")

40. By the Aurelian Wall. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, New York and London, 1898.

41. The Green Book of the Bards. (100 copies.) Wrappers. Diminutive 4to. Cambridge, 1898.

42. A Winter Holiday. Leaflet folder. 4to. 60 copies. New York, 1898.

43. A Winter Holiday. Boards. Narrow foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1899.

44. The Vengeance of Noel Brassard. (100 copies.) Boards. Diminutive 4to. Cambridge, MDCCCCXIX (Should be 1899).

45. Behind the Arras. (Second edition, with new designs by T. B. Meteyard.) Boards. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1899.

46. Northland Lyrics. By William Carman Roberts, Theodore Roberts and Elizabeth Roberts MacDonald. With epilogue in verse by Mr. Carman. Wide foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1899.

47. Last Songs from Vagabondia. (With Richard Hovey.) Boards. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1901. (Also 60 copies on large paper. Boards. Small 4to.)

48. Four Broadsheets. (1) The Spell, (2) A Vagabond Song, (3) The Sceptics, (4) Daisies (and) Marigolds. 4to. Twilight Park, N.Y., Sept. 1901.

49. Christmas Eve at St. Kavin's. (222 copies.) Vellum. Crown 8vo. New York, 1901.

50. Ballads and Lyrics. (Selected by A. H. Bullen.) 8vo. London, 1902.

51. A Coronation Ode. (6 copies only.) Wrappers. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1902.

52. Ode on the Coronation of King Edward. Boards. Wide 8vo. Boston, 1902.

53. From the Book of Myths. Pipes of Pan, No. 1. Narrow Crown 8vo. Boston, 1902.

54. Sappho: Lyrics. (60 copies.) Wrappers. Royal 8vo. (New York), Dec., 1902.

55. From the Green Book of the Bards. Pipes of Pan, No. II. Narrow Crown 8vo. Boston, 1903.

56. The Pipes of Pan. From the Book of Myths. (Identical in text only with the following item, but published before.) Foolscap 8vo. London, 1903.

57. From the Book of Myths. (New edition, with 4 additional poems.) Narrow. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1904.

58. The Word at St. Kavin's. (300 copies.) Undressed leather. Square. Crown 8vo. Nelson, N.H., 1903.

59. A Vision of Sappho. (60 copies.) Wrappers. 8vo. (New York) Dec., 1903.

59*a*. A Christmas Portfolio. Containing poem, The Three Things (reprinted as a Neighbor's Creed). Wrappers. Royal 8vo. London (Ont.) (1903).

60. Songs of the Sea Children. Pipes of Pan, No. III. Narrow Crown 8vo. Boston, 1904.

61. The Kinship of Nature. (Essays.) Portrait. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1904. (Published 1903.)

62. The World's Best Poetry. Bliss Carman Editor-in-Chief. 10 vols. 8vo. Philadelphia, (1904).

63. Songs from a Northern Garden. Pipes of Pan, No. IV. Narrow Crown 8vo. Boston, 1904.

64. Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics, (500 copies). Boards. Royal 8vo. Boston, 1904. (Also 50 copies on Japan vellum.)

65. The Friendship of Art. (Essays.) Portrait. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1904.

66. From the Book of Valentines. Pipes of Pan, No. V. Narrow Crown 8vo. Boston, 1905.

67. Poems. (500 copies.) 2 vols. Imperial 8vo. New York and London, 1904. (Published 1905.)

68. Poems. (Same as above, but with a portrait and an additional poem, The Vision of Sappho, not therein) 2 vols. Imperial 8vo. Boston, 1905.

69. The Poetry of Life. (Essays.) Portrait. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1905.

70. Low Tide on Grand Pré (and) Ballads of Lost

Haven. Portrait. 2 volumes in one. Boards. Post 8vo. Boston, 1905.

70*a*. A Vision of Sappho. Wrappers. Large 8vo. Boston, 1905.

70*b*. The Summer Cloud. Prose Poems. By Yone Noguchi. (Introduction by Mr. Carman) Illus. Wrappers. Crown 8vo. Tokyo, 1906.

71. The Princess of the Tower, etc. (62 copies.) Boards. Royal 8vo. New York, 1906.

72. Pipes of Pan. Definitive Edition. Portrait. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1906.

73. Sappho. One hundred Lyrics. Frontispiece. Diminutive 4to. London, 1906.

74. The Holy Grail, and Other Fragments. By Richard Hovey. (Preface by Mr. Carman.) Foolscap 8vo. New York, 1907.

75. The Gate of Peace. (112 copies, all but 24 of which were destroyed by fire.) Boards. Crown 8vo. New York, 1907.

76. Card (folded). The path to Sankoty. Diminutive 4to. (Siasconsett, Mass.) 1908.

77. The Making of Personality. (Essays.) Frontispiece. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1908.

78. The Gate of Peace. (New Edition, with a Prologue and an Epilogue.) (60 copies.) Wrappers. Wide Crown 8vo. New Canaan, Conn., April, 1909.

79. The Rough Rider and Other Poems. Limp leather. Foolscap 8vo. New York, 1909.

80. Leaflet. Madonna. Light green paper. Small 8vo. Christmas, 1910.

80*a*. A Century of Canadian Sonnets. Containing Edward Thring, not reprinted. 32 mo. Toronto (1910).

80*b*. The Calendar of the Month's Greetings from Canada arranged from "The Pipes of Pan." Photogravure. Illustrations. Large 4to, 4 leaves with tie. (Toronto), 1910.

81. An Apostle of Personal Harmonizing. Wrappers. Crown 8vo. (Reprinted from "Good Housekeeping" for May, 1911.)

82. The Champlain Tercentenary. (1909.) Report of the New York Lake Champlain Tercentenary Commission. (Containing Mr. Carman's The Champlain Country. 4to. Albany (N.Y.), 1911.

83. Address to the Graduating Class MCMXI. of the Unitrinian School of Personal Harmonizing. (250 copies.) Boards. Royal 8vo. New York, 1911.

84. Travelers Five. By Annie Fellows Johnson. With a foreword by Bliss Carman. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1911.

85. A Painter's Holiday and Other Poems. (150 copies privately printed on Italian handmade paper.

Boards. Super Royal 8vo. 1911. (Edition destroyed. One or two copies perhaps remain.)

86. A Painter's Holiday and Other Poems. (150 copies privately printed on French handmade paper.) Boards. Super Royal 8vo. 1911.

87. Card. Messiah. Sunshine House. Pale blue. Diminutive 4to. Christmas, 1911.

88. Echoes from Vagabondia. Boards. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1912.

89. Université de Rennes, Faculté des Lettres. Thése Doctorat. Bliss Carman. A Study in Canadian Poetry. By H. D. C. Lee. Wrappers. 8vo. Buxton (England), 1912.

89*a*. The Lyric Year. Containing poem, The Mysteriarchs (reprinted later as The Givers of Life). Crown 8vo. New York, 1912.

90. Daughters of Dawn. A Lyric Pageant or Series of Historic Scenes for Presentation with Music and Dancing. By Bliss Carman and Mary Perry King. Fifteen illustrations. Crown 8vo. New York, 1913.

91. To Those Who Wear Shoes. Wrappers. Foolscap 8vo. New York, 1913.

92. To Bliss Carman, April the Fifteenth, MCMXIII. A little Anthology by Four Admirers who dwell in the Canadian Homeland. (100 copies, num-

bered.) Wrappers. Post 4to. Privately printed; Toronto, Canada, April XV, MCMXIII.

93. Leaflet. Christmas Eve. A Choral. Square Foolscap 8vo. Dark blue paper. New Canaan, Conn., December, 1913.

93*a*. Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1913. Containing Over the Wintry Threshold and A Mountain Gateway. Boards. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1913.

94. Earth Deities and Other Rhythmic Masques. By Bliss Carman and Mary Perry King. Frontispiece. Crown 8vo. New York, 1914.

94*a*. Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1914. Containing Phi Beta Kappa Poem, and The Deserted Pasture. Boards. Cambridge, (1914).

95. A Check List of First Editions of the Works of Bliss Carman. Arranged by Frederic Fairchild Sherman. (75 copies.) Wrappers. Wide foolscap 8vo. New York, 1915.

96. For the Benefit of the Sufferers in Tangier. With prologue by Carman. Wrappers. Narrow 8vo. (New York) Dec. 15 (1915).

97. April Airs: A Book of New England Lyrics. Boards. Foolscap 8vo. Boston, 1916.

98. Four Sonnets. (438 copies). Wrappers. Small 4to. Boston (1916).

99. Card. The Yule Tree. Diminutive 4to. Sunshine House, Christmas, 1916.

99*a*. Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1917. Containing The Winter Scene, four sonnets. Boards. Crown 8vo. Boston, 1917.

100. James Whitcomb Riley. An Essay. (250 copies.) Boards. Royal 8vo. New York (1918).

101. The Man of the Marne and Other Poems. By B.C. and M.P.K. Wrappers. Small 4to. New Canaan, Conn., 1918.

101*a*. The Masque of Poets. Containing poem, Moment Musicale, not reprinted. Crown 8vo. New York, 1918.

101*b*. Canadian Poems of the Great War. Containing Tecumseh and the Eagles, and The Man of the Marne. Post 8vo. Toronto, (1918).

101*c*. The Great War in Verse and Prose. Containing poem, The Red Cross Nurse. Crown 8vo. Toronto, 1919.

102. Card. A Valentine. Crown 8vo. New Canaan, Conn., Feb. 14, 1920.

103. An Open Letter. Wrappers. Wide foolscap 8vo. Boston (1920).

104. Later Poems. With an Appreciation by R. H. Hathaway. Portrait. Wide foolscap 8vo. Toronto (1921).

105. Card (folded). Vestigia. With photograph reproduction. Diminutive 4to. (New York) 1922.

106. Ballads and Lyrics. Wide foolscap 8vo. Toronto (1923).

107. Winnipeg Male Voice Choir (Programme) February 15-16, 1923. Containing English version by Mr. Carman of Henri Duparc's Ecstasy. Wrappers. Narrow Crown 8vo. (Winnipeg, 1923.)

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